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UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
Department of Economics
Pietermaritzburg

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons regardless of sex, religion, race, colour or national origin, for appointment to the posts of:

SENIOR LECTURER
(One post)
LECTURER
(Two posts)

These posts have been created as a result of rapid growth in student numbers and the need for more staff. The successful candidates will be expected to contribute to the development of the Department and to the University as a whole.

The salary will be in the range: Senior Lecturer - R10 657-R12 045 p.a. Lecturer - R12 057-R12 173 p.a.

The commencing salary will be dependent on the qualifications and/or experience of the successful applicant. In addition, an annual vacation savings bonus is payable, subject to Treasury regulations.

Application forms, further particulars of the post and information on pension, medical aid, group insurance, staff bursary, housing loan and subsidy schemes, long leave conditions, and travelling expenses on first appointment are obtainable from Mr G. Henning, South African Universities Office, Chichester House, 272 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HE, with whom applications, on the prescribed form, must be lodged not later than 31st October 1983, quoting reference PNB 77/83.

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David Rosand: the art of Raphael

Oil and Latin America

The impracticality of history



Erid's gonnche and silver paint design for the curtain for a Folies-Bergère production of *Les Eventails* (1925), which will be sold at Sotheby's on Wednesday, October 26 in their sale of Ballet and Music Hall material.

John North: medieval science in the making
Opera in England 'The Changing Fenland'
Charles Williams, poet of theology
'Measure for Measure'; the Met centennial American etiquette; Old Boy networks
Nationalism in the modern world
Autobiographies: Richard Cobb, Michael Redgrave

NEW BOOKS

T.E. LAWRENCE: an hitherto unknown biographical/bibliographical note [T.E. as a publisher's Reader], 1983. Paper wrappers; limited to 200 copies. £7.00. Donald Weeks, 108a Shepherdess Walk, London N1 4ZP.

ANGLO-CHINESE RELATIONS 1949-1979. A Chinese Document in the British Foreign Office Records. Edited by J. C. H. Wu. 1983. 2 vols. £15.00. Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press.

OH TUCKER! Gladly Horatio to history of John Austen's life. Edited by J. C. H. Wu. 1983. 1 vol. £15.00. Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press.

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COSPI, PIETRO, and PAUL WEINLING (Editors) *Information Sources in the History of Science and Medicine* [Roy Porter]
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COMMENTARY

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ART

With grace abounding

David Rosand

DAVID THOMPSON

Raphael: The life and the legacy
256pp, with colour and black-and-white pictures. BBC Publications.
£19.95.
0363 301 495

ROGER JONES and NICHOLAS PENNY

Raphael
256pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Yale University Press.
£15.95.
0300 030614

PAUL JOANNIDES

The Drawings of Raphael
With a complete catalogue

211pp, with 690 illustrations, including 24 colour plates. Oxford: Phaidon. £65.
07146 23825

In Giorgio Vasari's biography, Raphael appears as a creature uniquely endowed by heaven and nature, a figure graced and a bringer of grace, whose own courteous manner was perceived to civilize artists and to enlighten the world. Until Raphael, Vasari explains, in his best evangelical mode,

most artists had in their temperament a certain madness and boorishness that made them strange and eccentric; and because of that the darkness and shadows of vice were more often manifest in them than the shining light of those virtues that make men immortal. For good reason, then, was Raphael, on the contrary, made to display clearly all the rarest virtues of the spirit accompanied by such grace, industry, beauty, modesty and finest manners that would purify every vice, however ugly, and correct every fault, no matter how grave. One can affirm with confidence that those who possess gifts as rare as those to be seen in Raphael of Urbino are not mere mortals but, if we dare say so, mortal Gods.

But even as we have returned to acknowledge this master of the classical style, the very idea of the style itself, with its assumption of formal perfection, enjoys a rather equivocal position in the modern canon. Heinrich Wölfflin, who did so much to mould our sense of the High Renaissance, distinguished the aristocratic quality of this style in contrast to the presumed bourgeois naturalism of the Quattrocento. The particular demands of a true classicism may well be unrecognisable with a democratic aesthetic.

"I hope you're going to help me to like him," according to David Thompson this was one common reaction to the announced plans for a BBC television programme on Raphael. The book giving printed form to that project is one of several published this year on the occasion of the quincentenary of Raphael's birth. Written (and produced) for a "general" audience, part of this volume's special appeal is that it does not take Raphael for granted. Thompson recognized the difficulty of presenting this avatar of classicism to a contemporary public, and he succinctly summarizes the dilemma - that "we have not yet found the place for him in our own culture". A critic for whom problems of confrontation and accommodation are clearly urgent, Thompson directly faces difficulties with their attendant ethical as well as aesthetic implications - that most professional art historians are unwilling even to acknowledge.

We are led with dreadful inevitability towards words and attributes which have lost their power to convince us. Balance, harmony, grace, facility, naturalness, beauty are no longer persuasive virtues. They are all bound up with what has been understood by classical standards and ideals, but our own century has never come to terms with them.

quality that seems to erase from the minds of men every base thought.

Nineteenth-century lovers of art enthusiastically embraced and embellished the image of "il buon Raffaello", whose Madonnas enchant us, wrote the Abate Luigi Lanzi (paraphrasing Anton Raphael Mengs), "because the painter in their portraits, and in their expressive smiles, has personified modesty, maternal love, purity of mind, and, in a word, grace itself". This Raphael, "born to paint Madonnas and Angels" (Eugene Muntz), has had to carry an embarrassing burden into our own century. Indeed, only by rescuing the artist from his more plausibly aesthetic admirers, by reclaiming other, more monumental aspects of his art, have modern criticism and scholarship been able to restore to the image of Raphael some of its original impressiveness.

Synthesizing the basic literature, Thompson offers a fine narrative account of the artist and his times; his text is intelligent, generally well-founded, critically perceptive, and nicely proportioned in its coverage. The general reader of this *Raphael* will learn much about the artist and the Renaissance world that nurtured him; he will also find an excellent introduction to the challenge and rewards of Raphael's art.

Raphael by Roger Jones and Nicholas Penny is also a book intended for the general reader - and, like Thompson's BBC volume, it too offers a generous complement of illustrations in colour (in both cases of varying quality). Jones and Penny also recognize, in their preface, that Raphael, compared with Leonardo and Michelangelo, "was not a rebel, a victim or a failure - which perhaps is

figure in the foreground with his elbow on a block, who was not included in the cartoon. More than anyone else in the fresco he powerfully does what one expects philosophers to do - sit and think - but his identity has not been established. (His features have, implausibly, been seen as those of Michelangelo.)

The reader is offered no further guidance, no bibliography, no indication that this figure has often (and quite plausibly) been identified as the melancholy Heraclitus, no sense that the recognition of the features as those of Michelangelo raises some interesting questions regarding the modality of Raphael's imagination and the possibilities of meaning - especially with respect to the professional implications of a composition that contains other portraits of artists,

If Jones and Penny limit the possibilities of meaning and, therefore, of our experience of certain of Raphael's works, they reward us in another way. They encourage us to rediscover the delight of his art, its sensuousness and sensuality. Their choice of opening illustration - a detail of the problematic "Fornarina": a revealed breast and the painter's signature on the armband of his presumed beloved - immediately sets the tone. And their appreciation of Raphael as a painter of flesh, of the special animation of his portraits, of the naturalism of his art recalls the enthusiasm of earlier admirers, like Vasari. That aspect of Raphael again appears to us as essential to his achievement - even a prerequisite for the apparently abstract perfection of his classicism.

But we are left, nevertheless, without an adequate critical account of that classicism. The style that Raphael brought to its purest expression - a style that evokes the expressive values of Phidian Athens - combined in almost implausible balance the ideal of form purified to geometric essence with the conviction of nature. Beneath the abstract perfection of Raphael's creatures we sense the affective life that animates them, and which draws us into the drama of their being: the apparently conventional forms of their masks move us to deep pity; their composure enforces a meditative response, and their measured choreography controls the rhythm of that response.

In some sense the structures and mechanisms of this dramatic classicism are epitomized in the "Massacre of the Innocents" that Raphael designed to be engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi. The signature on the engraving, which prominently declares Raphael as the "inventor", signals - quite possibly for the first time in this way - the special status of the artist as imagining mind. Distinguishing between invention and execution, the inscription on the "Massacre of the Innocents" realizes in practice a distinction already implicit in Alberti's earlier efforts to define the separate parts of the art of painting. What had become by the end of the Quattrocento a keen awareness of the artist as master of *istoria*, of narrative invention, was carried still further by Raphael. His powers as an inventor seemed almost to require many more execrable outlets; his ideas would eventually be realized by assistants, their brushes serving as mechanical extensions of the master's conceiving mind - as Marcantonio's burin, trained surely by the example of Raphael's pen, allowed even tentative or abandoned pictorial notions to find public and permanent expression. If these two aspects of Raphael's operation - the efficient use of studio hands and the mass diffusion of his inventions through prints - have contributed to the stigma of the academic that attaches to his reputation, they nonetheless must be considered as part of the complex phenomenon of his classicism, of pictorial ideas potentially abstracted from its own realization.

The idea of the "Massacre of the Innocents" may have come from Raphael's drawings for another project, the "Judgment of Solomon" on the vault of the Stanza della Segnatura. And its further development, like its final realization, seems to us essentially graphic: initially conceived and evolved in drawing, the composition and its constituent units, graphic as well as figural, maintain that scale. The function of the printed image is precisely to convey the *idea* of its invention, which we are invited to read, through the sustaining formal regularity of Marcantonio's burin work - which itself participates in the classicism of Raphael's style. Indeed, drawing offers some key to a understanding of that style: the regularity that informs contour and surface, propelled along paths unobstructed by natural accident, seems to initiate in the very gestures of Raphael the draughtsman.

"The history of Raphael's drawings is that of *historia* as a whole," writes Paul Joannides in his introduction to *The Drawings of Raphael*. "Most surviving drawings are functional, preparations



"Massacre of the Innocents", engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, reproduced from Raphael by Roger Jones and Nicholas Penny which is reviewed on this page.

including Raphael's own. (The notes to the text do offer specific references, but not consistently; in the case of the "School of Athens" the failure even to mention studies such as that by Carl Gustav Stridebeck is a disservice to the interested reader.)

Throughout, Jones and Penny insist upon a quite straightforward reading of Raphael's images. "There is no good reason to suspect any arcane or complex significance in them", as they write (with some justification) of the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel. We do indeed tend to share Vasari's observation that Raphael "always endeavored to paint narrative subjects as though they were written". Jones and Penny would seem to discourage us from seeking any further beyond the narrative surface, insisting always on the obvious, functional meaning, they run the danger of flattening the culture that Raphael articulated and which sustained him. Of the fable of Cupid and Psyche which decorates the loggia of Agostino Chigi's Villa Suburbana, for example, they admit that it was

commonly regarded as an allegory of the immortality of the soul, and although there is nothing in Raphael's treatment of the narrative to encourage an eschatological allegesis it would not have been surprising if such an interpretation had occurred to the more high-minded visitors to the villa.

Clearly, we are not invited to join those visitors, and, just as clearly, the implication is left that Raphael's intention can have had little to do with such exegetical self-indulgence. But even as we acknowledge the overt, conjugal significance of the theme, we must assume that the painter totally abstained from the courtly games of interpretation? On a basic level, such interpretive responsibility only served to enrich the experience of an image.

for painting, their style an indication of the intended pictorial effects. The study of Raphael's drawings has in fact served as a foundation for significant advances in modern scholarship on his art in general — in the monumental work of Oskar Fischel (recently continued by Konrad Oberhuber), in the catalogues of the great collections of Raphael drawings such as those in the Ashmolean Museum (by K. T. Parker) and the British Museum (by Philip Pouncey and John Gere), and in the studies of individual projects (by John Shearman, Oberhuber, and others).

Joannides has sought to assemble the fruits of this collective labour and to present in a single volume the complete corpus of drawings by Raphael. Both the serious student and the general reader will be grateful for this publication, for now we have a convenient catalogue of all the drawings — although debates over attribution, especially involving Raphael's chief assistants, Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, will continue in and around the fringes of this body of work. Appealing to an audience on two levels, Joannides has given his book an intelligent and useful structure. It consists of an introductory text ("a general account of Raphael's drawings in the context of his artistic production"), a section of forty-eight plates ("focusing on particularly beautiful or significant drawings"), and a catalogue of 460 entries, fully illustrated by small reproductions (adequate to their documentary purpose). There is also a necessary concordance: intended to serve as an index of collections, it also provides a brief bibliography for each drawing catalogued, as well as a summary of other opinions on attribution. Specialists may, however, be frustrated by the brevity of the entries, the lack of full documentation and bibliography, and the failure to transcribe inscriptions.

Guided by an essentially functional approach, Joannides presents the

drawings within the larger context of the projects they prepared. He discusses choice of medium and shifts of style in relation to purpose, the rationale for the drawing becoming the explanation of its particular form. This historical approach, inextricably linked to the sequence of Raphael's career, permits the ordering of the drawings and leads naturally into such problems as that of studio participation — and these concerns strongly shape both introduction and catalogue.

"Raphael lived at a turning-point in the history of Italian draughtsmanship," Joannides writes without exaggeration, "at the moment of a fundamental shift in vision and technique". It is on this essentially critical level, however, that his text falters, for he never considers the larger significance of that shift, thereby depriving us of a fuller measure of Raphael's achievement. Despite many fine insights, Joannides does not generally realize the potential or the implications of his own perceptions; nor does he capitalize on the possibilities of his book's organization. The short texts accompanying the large illustrations of the plates (and one can only regret that not more of these are in colour) might have afforded the opportunity to explore many more aspects of drawing.

Joannides's descriptions too often seem content with superficial categorization or laconic ascription. The most extended discussions relate to stylistic or formal sources or, predictably, to function, the role of a drawing in the preparation of a painting. A particularly uncomfortable term that he frequently falls back on is "pentimento study", as though by so naming a sheet of rapid sketches one has somehow accounted for its unique dynamics. True, Leonardo was the first artist of Vasari's modern era deliberately to test the implications, theoretical as well as practical, of the rapid sketch, to explore the range of its expressive possibilities. But to assume that Raphael's own exploration of this

active mode of drawing must indicate the direct influence of the older master seems unnecessarily restrictive. The development of such an exploratory activity, with its internal dialectic of response and alternative, appears rather an organic one, intent in the very act of drawing, the draughtsman expanding and realizing the potential of that act.

In a particularly striking sheet of studies of the Virgin and Child in the British Museum (F. 1-36; Joannides cat. 180), for example, the circular motion of Raphael's discovering pen is at once revealing of the classical aspiration of his style and of the natural dynamics of his imaging process. Especially in a sheet such as this we feel closer to a comprehension of Raphael's classicism. Joannides recognizes this:

Here the pen strokes, moving in ovoid patterns, generate rather than depict the forms; they do not give the impression of being studied from models but of growing out of the interconnection of pen and paper. Even Leonardo's most elaborate pentimento studies retain the restricting angularity of life. Here, although the play of rhythms is much more abstract, given the vitality and emotional power of the theme of the relation of mother and child, there is no sense that intimacy is sacrificed to formal values — indeed the abstraction renders the relation more elemental.

This is fine criticism. There are many such passages in Joannides's book; each one stands out in its brevity, promising us still more intimate knowledge of Raphael and his difficult classicism — but never quite fulfilling that promise.

Art history as a discipline can take us just so far toward understanding. Something more is required. Only a genuinely critical effort, grounded in but transcending history, can answer to our needs, can lead us towards that fuller understanding of the art of Raphael — and not only of Raphael.



"Studies for the Virgin and Child", in pen and brown ink with faint traces of red chalk, executed by Raphael in about 1505.

In seemly deterioration

Lucy Ellmann

RICHARD INGRAMS AND JOHN PIPER

Piper's Places: John Piper in England and Wales.

184pp. With colour and black-and-white pictures. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press. £12.50. 0 7011 2350 0

John Piper is eighty this year. He has endured the tempests of twentieth-century art by ignoring most of them, although he did experiment with collage and abstraction in the 1930s, and belonged to Ben Nicholson's "Seven and Five Society" for a year. Through an early love of churches and ruins, work with Sir John Betjeman on the Shell Guides to Britain, and an understanding of the work of Cotman, Turner and Dufty, Piper developed his own style of neo-Romantic art. A Romantic, explains Richard Ingrams, is "someone who discerns the extraordinary in the ordinary and who finds excitement in his own backyard". This is not easily done in English, or even Welsh, backyards, so it is to Piper's credit that he managed to "make something of his own subjects".

Piper's Places is neither biography nor art criticism; it offers a selection of the artist's best work, some reproduced here for the first time, strung together with comments on the events and locations which fostered it. These topographical paintings feature churches, castles, old houses, seascapes, prehistoric sites, and the gardens of Stowe and Stourhead. Piper takes advantage of church sculpture to make his only drawings of the human form, with hostile rural pagan results. But his favourite subjects are buildings in the process of slow and seemly deterioration. He writes evocatively of his easy access to architectural ruins, enjoyed by Cotman in the early nineteenth century. "Most country churches were then at an extreme of picturesque decay. Ready to drop like old castles, they were in an exquisite state of decay."

In general, Piper's pictures involve a cleverly incomplete outline in black, occasionally accompanied by

additional details in white, and positioned over a blurred, coloured background. This separation of form from colour flattens the painting, although luminous buildings at times protrude in contrast to dark skies and foliage. Starkly spotlighted, they look a little like secret military camps, stumbled upon at night. The few collages included in the book are lively seascapes, in which Piper's method is somewhat reversed. The patches of colour (here pieces of paper) represent precisely the details of boats and buildings, modified but not greatly interfered with by the windows, waves, and shadows roughly painted in black. His reluctance to encumber forms with a sense of scale and weight often diminishes the scenes; he finds impressive... Thus a wan Windsor

Castle, with its ruled lines and exact joining to the perfectly flat ground, looks like a model assembled from a rather challenging cut-out kit. Piper's oil paintings attempt to adapt a characterful medium to the purposes of a watercolourist. As usual, a great mistake. In one such oil, the grass looks fake, the church flat, and other grim shapes (trees?) are ranged around the picture in far too petrifed a manner.

Through Piper's varied landscapes meanders Ingrams's wishy-washy text. He never applies himself to the painter. This must be what the dust-jacket speaks of as his "very appropriate informality" — he is the sort of host who forgets to serve the supper. In their review of Piper's

encounters with bombed Coventry and St Snowdonia, Ingrams is best when he trails behind the artist, tiding up on certain points. After Piper is quoted at length on the time of day at which it is possible to find central Reading beautiful, Ingrams mentions that the entire town centre has since been rebuilt. He has saved us a trip, which is kind. Unwisely though, he sometimes launches into greater detail:

At Portland Bill itself there is now a large car park but the rows of brightly painted holiday huts are still there and the triangular "son-mark" next to the lighthouse and the little stone cottage with the stepped roof standing near the derelict wharf are now used by the fishermen to lower their boats into the sea.

Such prose can hardly compete with Piper's Shell Guide entries. Determinedly unambitious, Ingrams's contribution to the book ends with a strangely embarrassing account of an uneventful tour of the Fens he made with the Pipers in 1980. Ingrams apparently spent the time taking down Piper's every utterance while the artist remained more interested in looking at churches.

The book ends with a whimper. Walking back to the hotel we note the alight melancholy atmosphere that public schools have — perhaps because they provoke unhappy memories of one's own school days. Turning the page, we find that Mr Ingrams has vanished, leaving only his hat and index.

Welcoming the West

John Milner

BEVERLY WHITNEY KEAN

All The Empty Palaces: The Merchant Patrons of Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Russia.

342pp. Barrie and Jenkins. £15.50. 0 09 147980 0

In the first decade of this century Moscow became the most advanced centre for the collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, Fauve, and Cubist art. It is not extraordinary that, and the theme of Beverly Whitney Kean's well-researched book, that these brilliant collections were assembled chiefly by merchants. They were not remote and aloof figures, but almost without exception became closely involved with young Russian artists, opening their palaces for literary, musical and artistic gatherings. The achievement of Sergei Shchukin, for example, the most celebrated of these collectors, was not simply to amass in Moscow a collection of modern French art of unparalleled quality and daring, but also to have exerted an essential influence on the art of his day by displaying his collection, with his patient generosity

to public and painters alike, by introducing, years before Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibitions in London, the work of Matisse, Picasso and many others. In Moscow, the intensive study, display and collection of Russian icons flourished alongside a growing enthusiasm for the new art of Paris, Berlin and Munich; and ironically, when Matisse visited Shchukin, he was welcomed by Russian artists committed to a distinctly Russian and Eastern art.

In *All The Empty Palaces*, Beverly Kean concentrates upon merchant patrons and collectors, and in doing so, she moves close to the crux of the matter: for Ryabushinsky, Tishcheva, Morozov and Shchukin were not peripheral figures. Their collections constantly evolved, reflecting their numerous contacts with Russian as well as Western artists and dealers, their palaces becoming living museums where, bureaucratic considerations were out of place and where personal involvement was the hallmark. Informal gatherings attracting men as diverse as Denis, Chailovskiy, Yulinsky, Lunacharsky, Matisse, Larionov, Diaghilev and Malevich, Kean is assisted by the collectors as individuals as skilful by the work they assembled. If this technique permits Kean's consideration of individual

paintings it nevertheless provides a lucid insight into the merchant patrons' lives and personalities; and they emerge from her survey idiosyncratic creatures beset as much by tragedy as by ambition and motivated by a relentless love of art.

Pride of place is given, quite properly, to Ivan Morozov and Sergei Shchukin, who provided the final and lavish flowering of a financial and cultural phenomenon that could not survive the Revolutions of 1917. At times they acquired works scarcely dry from the studios of Matisse and Picasso, visiting Durand-Ruel, Vollard or Kahnweiler within days of each other. Kean dwells at length — it is the most moving of her personality studies — on the suffering and patient Shchukin, whose Trubetskoy Palace had salons filled with paintings by Gauguin, Matisse, and Picasso. Devastating family bereavements led him to seek solace in the remote monastery of St Catherine at Wadi el-Dzer in the Sinai, where he met a painter monk on whose wall hung a reproduction after Matisse. Shchukin's last for Matisse became insatiable and he did not omit to send pigments to the painter-monk in the Sinai.

Among other collectors investigated by Kean are the withdrawn and studious Pavel Tretyakov, whose life is described as "a parable of diligence and integrity" — he systematically assembled a representative collection of Russian art, which, in his time, competed with Alexander III's sacred artworks than of creative individuals. Ryabushinsky, playboy and bon viveur, who financed the Golden Fleece exhibition. In the spring of 1908, 197 recent French paintings were exhibited on the Russian coast, so that Larionov and Gorky, Chabrov, for example, hung in the company of Pissarro, Cézanne, Degas, Bonnard, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Matisse.

The Revolutions of 1917 destroyed the social structure of which Morozov and Shchukin were a part. Both were given the curious honour of working as curators of the new collections, and both in due course the artists they so admired, but no longer able to collect. *All The Empty Palaces* concludes with a brief outline of the subsequent history of the collections, which now form the core of the modern collection at the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum, and where the achievements of these extraordinary merchants are finally preserved and recognized.

Safe with the bourgeoisie

Michael Neve

RICHARD COBB

Still Life: Sketches from a Tunbridge Wells childhood

161pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press. £8.95. 0 7011 2695 7

RAINE SPENCER

The Spencers on Spas

Photographs by John Spencer

160pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.55. 0 297 78310 6

When not engaged with Robespierre and St Just, and keeping up his tirade against these founding fathers of all that is monstrous in modern European history, Richard Cobb has applied his historical genius to describing the English bourgeoisie, of us. The middle class refuses to write about itself in England, refuses to do the decent Hegelian thing and bring its story into the logic (and possibly extinguishing glare) of history. Somewhere, we all have a trunk with our name on it, or had a Universal Aunt, and we all know what Philip Larkin's devastating two words "that vase" tell us about home. But we would rather not say so. The prep-school is to stay behind its dark rhododendrons; "Tunbridge Wells" is really the name for a certain kind of unconscious mental life, and unlike Karl Marx, none of us would ever admit that sitting in the sun at Eastbourne might be pleasant. The English bourgeoisie has never properly taken power, and one of the reasons is

The energy that has made his historical writing so individual springs from a division, between languages, between countries, between a rhetoric of denunciation of past, celebrated monstrosities and a protective but equally fierce defence of the marginal, the unfixed, the failed. The vividness

of Cobb's historical style is genuinely startling. It is the opposite of historical reflection, and more like painting. He has now returned to one of the original sites of his life — a childhood in Tunbridge Wells — to extend the range of his observation, and to perform his customary and still remarkable feat of making pure autobiography part of a general, social history.

Still Life, in ways that the author would surely take pleasure in, must be the most bourgeois work of memory and recollection written in English since the war. Cobb has broken one of the strangest silences in English social commentary: on the missing history of the English bourgeoisie, of us. The middle class refuses to write about itself in England, refuses to do the decent Hegelian thing and bring its story into the logic (and possibly extinguishing glare) of history. Somewhere, we all have a trunk with our name on it, or had a Universal Aunt, and we all know what Philip Larkin's devastating two words "that vase" tell us about home. But we would rather not say so. The prep-school is to stay behind its dark rhododendrons; "Tunbridge Wells" is really the name for a certain kind of unconscious mental life, and unlike Karl Marx, none of us would ever admit that sitting in the sun at Eastbourne might be pleasant. The English bourgeoisie has never properly taken power, and one of the reasons is

that its history is a conspiracy of silence, a stifled cough at tea-time on a grey afternoon.

Richard Cobb must know this, but his purpose is not the simple one of writing a history of the economic origins of Tunbridge Wells. Instead, he mythologizes the place where he spent large parts of his early days; he paints it, he saves it. Cobb adds Tunbridge Wells, for most people only a cliché, to his list of European enclaves that speak of safety, of tiny rituals, and of continuity. Tunbridge Wells is the opposite of Revolution. And it is not peopled by Mary Wollstonecrafts — one of the famous victims of Cobb's berserk invective — or even Mary Shelleys, although she did spend most of her last years in Bournemouth.

Still Life has a classic opening: the approach to the town by train, and the accuracy is graphic. Past the suburb of High Brooms, where none of the good trains stop, and into the long tunnel leading to the Central Station, to the "atygian gloom of both platforms". And whole lives, both past and present, are given their sentence: "The 5.50 was the liquid train — 6 to 7 doubles between Cannon Street and the Wells. There follows a controlled and affectionate account of the inter-war middle class that has few rivals. Cobb names the hills of Tunbridge Wells — Ephraim, Slon, Pleasant among them. He walks the Pantiles, inevitably, but knows about books, about the contents

of his mother's drawers, about airguns and possible violence. He describes how hours of gazing into windows in Tunbridge Wells revealed nothing of interest. He certainly shows us versions of himself ("As far as I was concerned, Tunbridge Wells and sex did not reside together") and appears, in a photograph taken when he was seventeen, both apprehensive and handsome.

He tells us that there were some German bombs dropped on Tunbridge Wells but "they do not appear to have meant for Tunbridge Wells, but were probably left-over from London raids". And about mythological people, about the Black Widow, and the man who taught him geology. We hear the voices: "why did you lead with hearts?" we see, without quite seeing, what the couple are doing on the common; we know that there are probably no Jews around, and that it would be nice if there were, to replace the Catholics: "Why had my parents inflicted on me the unspeakable initials of R.C.C.?"

A still life, then, in watercolours, but with its fiercer moments ("I was in love, with a boy at school called Hook.") There is a lovely conclusion, taking tea at Mr Evans's, and looking at pictures, especially those of David Cox. And an epilogue, about his mother's death. It is a period piece, but without the dated feeling that the phrase implies. For the modern denizen of the place, Cobb's Tunbridge Wells is certainly a limited one, but then it is meant to be. He would, for example, have nothing to say about the modern Showfields West station (on which he is very good); more importantly, he is out of tune on the matter of vice. Tunbridge Wells was of course the *fons et origo* of spring water and vice, in the Restoration, as the poems of Rochester testify. Cobb speaks of the

Sussex public house, near the Pantiles, which in his day was known as the "Sussex Shades". It was once a little infamous, peopled by characters "looking as if they belonged to some secret brotherhood", but then, our guide assures us, it was cleaned up, and "the Pantiles has lost the alight frisson of vice". I am pleased to say this is no longer the case: one of the reasons why the Sussex is one of England's finest taverns is exactly because it has the atmosphere that Cobb believes disappeared decades ago. The Pantiles remains peopled by ghouls from its bawdy past, before imperialism brought home all the majors and their wives, or the children farmed out to relatives.

One ghost, above all, unites *Still Life* and the elegant book on English spas by Raine and John Spencer: that of King Charles the Martyr. The be-headed king seems to be in all spa towns, to testify to the essential conservatism of such places, and in Tunbridge Wells the church named after him is especially prominent. The after him is especially prominent. The Spencers have made a quieter, more conventional picture of Cheltenham, Harrogate, Malvern, Leamington and of course Bath. The photographs please but carry no history, only the sense of safe harbours for a valentudinarian bourgeoisie. Spa towns shouldn't just make us think of Bath: we can think of Charles Darwin trying to feel better in Victorian Malvern, or of Buxton, one of the most delightful places in Europe. Hydropathy was one way the Victorian middle class tried to avoid medical heroics, and this book conveys the deep, hotel-like comfort that such strategies necessitated. These two books seem to share a covert realism, but they then part company, for reasons to do with medium and with tone. Photographs cannot compete with the minutistic force of Richard Cobb, a Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells who is one of the few genuine practitioners of the art of memory.

Whiffs of theatricals

Hilary Spurling

MICHAEL REDGRAVE

In My Mind's Eye: An Autobiography

256pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.55. 0 297 78278 9

When Michael Redgrave was a child of four, he once used his middle right hand to point at something, a trick of his father's which so frightened his mother that she nearly screamed. Michael's father was a legendary figure, the "cock of the North" and star of the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, tall, lean and handsome, adored by both sexes, equally at home as Hamlet and as the pensive bush-ranger hero of any number of melodramas written by himself. Michael married as his second (possibly bigamous) wife an actress, Daisy Scudamore, shortly before her

as Michael was born in 1908; and he took off for Australia shortly afterwards, leaving behind him a trail of fatherless children; and reputation still glowing thirty years later when Michael came across a former dresser from the Brit: "You're Roy Redgrave's son?" she asked with gratifying excitement and admiration. Michael himself made his stage debut in Australia (where Roy had been rashly pursued by Daisy) at the age of two, tongue-tied and fearful, in a prophetic monologue recited by his father:

The dramatic called "Life" you have got to appear in
Add a bit of a "call boy" to start with
To remember that some day you're sure to be dead

By the end eventually of drink, long after his wife had cut her losses and moved with the baby to England, Michael was an old woman, writes Sir Michael, whose "own childhood and boyhood were shaped by his mother's premonitory terror that he might grow up to resemble his father."

Even a leading lady in the provinces would hardly hope for more than £3 a week in 1910 when Daisy Scudamore was earning a living; dumping Michael on a series of temporary employers, handless and professional, she had taken up on the boat of a travelling well-to-do ten-planner returning from Ceylon, an honorary member of the next few years, earning round about seven years old when he was transported to a new world by his stepfather, some time during the First

World War, though the date of his mother's second marriage is given elsewhere as 1922 (the year Roy Redgrave died in a Sydney hospital). If no questions were asked at the time, no answers are to be given now. "As for Peggy, my half-sister, how and when she came on the scene?" wonders Redgrave, offering no further clue as to whether, in all their years at the same baby-minders, Peggy had known any more than he did about her father, or even realized that Michael's mother was her too.

This must be one of the easiest autobiographies ever penned, even by the unassuming standards of theatrical memoirs. Redgrave is anything more forthcoming about his childhood than about what happened afterwards, whether in professional or private life. His much vaunted liaison with Edith Evans, his spats with Coward and Greville, his highly competitive relations with Olivier and Gielgud are barely touched on. Family, friends, fellow actors are treated with impartial gallantry and reserve, while most of the productions he acted in might have been directed by robots for all we learn to the contrary. Perhaps the nearest thing to an authentic *frisson* in the whole book is a feeling account of Donald Wolfit who, having agreed to appear in Tyrone Guthrie's *King Lear*, was growing rightly uneasy: "Because, you see, he said, 'I have thirteen effects in my Lear, and I don't mean to lose one of them.'"

But, however short on theatrical anecdote, *In My Mind's Eye* does give off a powerful sense of the theatre's importance, clearly crucial all his life to Redgrave — as a means of exploring reality while simultaneously holding it at bay. Hence no doubt the fact that, for all his celebrated romantic triumphs, his most memorable effects have always come from playing misfits, rejects, outsiders — Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Ratcliff's "Cockney", Chekhov's "Tussock", and Uncle Vanya. Redgrave briefly, at one point, glances briefly at the difficulties of his marriage, about the convention that prevents people like himself from openly discussing the secret fears and miseries expressed for his generation in plays like *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *The Family Reunion*. His own philosophy comes in practice closer to another of Roy Redgrave's charming, melancholy turn-of-the-century ballads, encapsulating the gaiety, courage and casual desperation of a life spent whistling in the dark:

More light, more love: let the music chime
And the feet again begin,
With wing, with kiss, keep back the time
When day and ghosts come in.

with a younger, outstandingly dim and inhibited fellow lodger called Peg — for a spin in the car by this uncle. They found Daisy waiting, not in the usual theatrical digs, but on the front steps of a house of her own with a maid (Michael had never seen a domestic servant before), drawing-room, grand piano and a bedroom apiece for "Miss Peggy" ("I didn't like to ask why there was a room for Peggy") and "Master Michael". Michael's mother took him aside and whispered that Peggy was his sister: "Your half-sister, I mean," she corrected herself. "And Uncle Andy and I, for better or worse, are married."

Michael was promptly dispatched to find the stranger downstairs, give him a kiss and call him "Daddy". A precocious and independent small boy, much petted, accustomed to turn heads and shift for himself, he was required with no notice and no word said to adjust from the friendly, unstable, loose-fitting, familiar world of digs and lodgings to the rigidly controlled pressures of conventional middle-class life, expressed from now on in the freezing, unspoken constraint of family meals. Michael's stepfather was a military man, generous but unimaginative, phillistine, conservative and adamantly opposed, for the boy's own good, to the faintest whiff of theatricals. "I feared him," writes Redgrave, adding only that of all the rooms in the house he hated and dreaded the dining-room.

He was packed off to prep and public school (Clifton College, where his Lady Macbeth and his ravishing Captain Absolute caused such a stir that the bigger boys fought for his favours), followed by Cambridge (where he founded a literary magazine with Anthony Blunt and acted on sets designed by Guy Burgess), and a stint as a schoolmaster at Cranleigh (where the tough, sporting regime was briefly interrupted by a whirl of spectacular theatrical treats for the boys). All in all, it must have been a considerable relief to all parties when, in spite of the combined misgivings of his mother and stepfather, Michael finally slipped over the border between the amateur and the professional stage at Liverpool Rep in 1934.

A deadpan reaction, it is by Redgrave's own account, his habitual method of defusing any potentially explosive or startling piece of information, which presumably explains why this extraordinary story is told with so little expression and still less explanation. He must have been round about seven years old when he was transported to a new world by his stepfather, some time during the First

Growing up and away

Margaret Forster

PHYLLIS WILLMOTT

A Green Girl

144pp. Peter Owen. £8.95. 0 7206 0610 1

On September 14, 1933, Phyllis Willmott left her Victorian terraced house in Lewisham with its outside lavatory and gas lighting to catch a tram for Greenwich, where she entered for the first time Roan School for Girls, a grammar school. A simple journey, but for her, as for so many working-class children, as hazardous as going up the Amazon.

Phyllis was a "green girl" because that was the colour of her uniform. Purchasing it had been the first hazard because Mum tenaciously resisted buying it at the official (expensive) shop when its goods would be "no different from what you get at Marks". But school itself held no perils — she loved it, settled in well, made friends easily. The dangers all lay at home.

Sharing the grammar-school ethos made her an alien in her own family. She corrected the family's speech because she herself had been corrected. The tension grew over the years and her work suffered, until she only just passed Matric. Mum and Dad waited expectantly to see what all this meant. She herself wondered as she worked in the Times Book Club in Wigmore Street, half asleep with boredom. Grammar school had raised her aspirations and ambitions but left them unfulfilled. In June 1939, she gave notice, aged seventeen, and moved to a bank. Then war began and this slice of autobiography ends with Phyllis joining a Bomber Command unit as a weather girl.

A Green Girl is not as successful as *Growing up in a London Village*, the first book in which Mrs Willmott described her childhood. But then adolescence is much harder to deal with, particularly when one is anxious, as this author is, to keep everything as simple and light-hearted as possible. Adolescence is neither simple nor light-hearted and trying to make it so leads to fatal understatement. Take,

for example, the crisis in sleeping arrangements. "Like many working-class children, both then and now, Phyllis had to sleep in her parents' bedroom because of overcrowding. Once she went to Roan it became obvious that she was too old to be doing so. Trying to sleep became purgatory — "rattling noises, then a regular creak of the springs of the double bed mated with the sound of Dad's breathing which got heavier and fiercer...". With her newly acquired knowledge of what such sounds meant she found all this hard to ignore, but the real shock was not hearing Dad's exertions, but hearing Mum say "That little bitch is awake again!" This is the kind of comment which does not fit into this sort of gentle, uncritical narrative. It needs explanation and the distress it caused the author needs expressing; if not, the fabric of her "growing up", which is what the book is about, has big holes in it. To what extent was the author alienated from her family? How painful was this alienation? And was it inevitable?

A Green Girl answers none of these questions — questions that arise quite naturally in the reading of it. They are important too, as Mrs Willmott almost certainly knows; part of the attraction of her books is that, in them she is covering largely uncharted territory. Both in fiction and non-fiction the experiences of working-class boys who make the transition, through education, from one class to another is well documented; not so with working-class girls. The burden for them was greater. Boys were always admired for wanting to "get on". Girls were not. They pulled, as Mrs Willmott pulled, not just against different standards but against a fundamental objection to their leaving the home at all. The grammar schools gave them their chance and to understand why so few of them were able to take it and use it to its full potential (which Phyllis certainly did not) we need to know much more. Mrs Willmott could have told us. But she has written, presumably, what she wished to write, and that is an amusing, sensible little history of life as a grammar-school girl in the 1930s. It is a compliment to her skill that one is greedy for more.

Traditional tendencies

Vivian Nutton

G. E. R. Lloyd

Science, Folklore and Ideology: Studies in the life sciences in Ancient Greece

260pp. Cambridge University Press. £25 (paperback, £8.95). 0 521 25314 4

Western science was for many years seen as the creation of a few Greeks: Hippocrates, Aristotle, Euclid and Archimedes—who by applying reason to a mass of varied observations laid down the guide-lines for all future developments. The later work of Ptolemy and Galen, who in the second century AD brought together the astronomical and medical learning of their predecessors, canalized this stream of ideas, and imposed on subsequent generations a Greek system of scientific method. This was even viewed as a crucial influence on Greek philosophical and historical thought.

Historians of philosophy naturally objected, asserting the importance of pre-Socratic philosophy in determining the theories and methodology of early medicine, while medical historians pointed to the advances in medical knowledge made as a result of the human dissections of Herophilus and Erasistratus about 280 BC. Yet these qualifications did little to alter the general picture, or to direct attention away from the small number of canonical works. Three-quarters of the

Hippocratic Corpus was jettisoned as not coming from the pen of Hippocrates himself, although the offending texts were of similar antiquity, and post-Aristotelian natural science and medicine endured the double reproach of superstition and plagiarism.

For a decade and a half, G.E.R. Lloyd has been steadily changing these perspectives by his studies of early Greek medicine and science. He has examined their methods of investigation and argumentation, and by setting all the extant writing within a social and philosophical context, has freed Anglo-Saxon scholars at least from the tyranny of great names. In the first part of *Science, Folklore and Ideology* he turns his attention to the confrontation of writers on zoology and medicine with more widespread beliefs about the attributes, both moral and physical, of animals, and about the place, and diseases, of women. His results are enlightening, even if perhaps predictable.

Lloyd's final sections, however, break new ground in their emphasis on pre-Aristotelian science. We are introduced to Theophrastus and the root-cutters, to Uncle Pliny, well-read, well-inventured, but often confused, and to two Ephesian medical contemporaries of c. 400, Rufus and Soranus. Soranus and Theophrastus, in particular, are praised for their independence of thought and for their general honesty and care. Even they, however, could not break free entirely from presuppositions based on the erroneous arguments of the past.

Rufus is here considered as the author of an anatomical textbook. Recent discoveries of several of his lost treatises in Arabic may soon permit a similar assessment of his theories and activities in the bedside, where he shows an impressive command of observational techniques, sound learning, common sense and compassion.

Lloyd's concern in these last sections is largely with the problems involved in the creation and maintenance of scientific traditions. In classical antiquity there were few institutions for the teaching of medicine; instruction was usually carried out in a doctor's house, and evidence for state or civic intervention in medical education is both scanty and late. Large cities like Alexandria, Rome or Ephesus, with wealthy patients, would attract important physicians, and hence become centres to which would come aspiring men of means in search of a competent master. The Alexandrian Museum, so often imagined as an Institute of Advanced Studies, became a dining-club, and never took in students, while, despite Lloyd's suggestion, there is no evidence for foreigners going to Kos to learn medicine.

To create a scientific tradition was difficult. Discoveries might be made and then forgotten; terminology was vague and confusing. One word might denote several different plants, or one organ be given many different names. Precision of nomenclature might exist, but in unlikely contexts: contrast the six different terms for

facial hair with the clumsy circumlocutions for the individual spinal vertebrae and nerves. Botany and pharmacology presented an equal spectacle of confusion, with perhaps fatal results, if the wrong plant with the right name was chosen, or say nothing of the possibility of corruption in the copying out of the recipe. No wonder that some pharmacologists wrote out their prescriptions in verse as the best way to reduce this type of error.

A tradition once created might flourish only briefly. Anatomical research, on animals, and, later, on humans, seems to have been the invention of Diocles, Aristotle and their contemporaries, and to have ceased within two generations. It revived again about 100 BC but had almost died under the weight of Galen's authority by AD 250. Soranus, a methodist, reveals many differences between himself and members of the same "sect" or "tendency" over the interpretation of even their major tenets, and it is hard to reconcile his gynaeceology either with a denial of the value of anatomy or with a rampant scepticism, claimed for methodists by Sextus Empiricus. Even if there were agreed general approaches to medical and scientific problems, they might always be modified by contact with the data of experience whether obtained directly or indirectly. Pharmacology, indeed, was an obvious source of contention, with mythological tales demanding attention as well as the evidence of shrewd but illiterate peasants. The dubious reputation of these local experts, who were consulted about everything from cures

for snake bites to methods of removing interfering relatives, is a commonplace in ancient literature, yet their knowledge might be uniquely valuable. Theophrastus expresses some scepticism over their claims, and in theory, does the elder Pliny—but his reliance on written texts led him perhaps, and, at the same time, to include dubious and magical remedies simply because they were already recorded. The development of a tradition may here be viewed as stifling, and it would be worth comparing Pliny's methods and results with those of his contemporaries Dioscorides and Scribonius Largus, a writer on pharmacology who visited Britain in AD 43 with the Roman army.

Genfrey Lloyd in this book, then, opens new perspectives on the development of the life sciences in Greece and Rome, and frees them from a deadening historiographical tradition that presumes only a few great "rational" treatises worthy of study. His scientists are human beings, trying to make sense of the data in front of them, and, at times, succeeding impressively. But instead of taking a Soranus or a Theophrastus, let alone the shadowy Hippocrates, as the norm, and wondering why the others failed, Lloyd invites us to view a plurality of competing systems, where new discoveries are made in spite of, rather than because of, existing scientific literature. Soranus's sober *Gynaeceology* faced stiff competition from Cleopatra's *Guide to feminine health and beauty*.

Sixty-six glorious years

John Baines

Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt 272pp. Waiminsters: Aris and Phillips. £12.50. 0 85668 215 2

After Tutankhamun, Ramesses II is probably the most widely known king of ancient Egypt, and his temples at Abu Simbel rank after the much earlier Great Pyramid in popular renown. Unlike Tutankhamun, a great deal is known about his immense reign, whose vast building programmes have contributed to a widespread larger-than-life image of Egypt, the antithesis of that "balance and sense of the measure of things" which at least one Egyptologist sees as characteristic of Egyptian culture in general.

Yet balance is discernible even in the proportions of the colossi of Abu Simbel, which are identical to those of miniature statues, and balance, or mere humanity, can also be seen in the reign, for which abundant and varied evidence allows detailed reconstructions of many aspects of society—even if, as always in Egypt, 90 per cent of the material relates to 1 per cent of the people. The information about mundane affairs and international relations renders the period more ordinary, but also, more interesting, than lesser known ones which are dominated by a few monuments.

K. A. Kitchen, the leading historian of Ramesses II, offers his book for enjoyment, not study, as a companion-piece to a planned academic work on the "Egyptian Nineteenth Dynasty". This is the first attempt there has been to present a well-illustrated popular history of a single king's reign. In keeping with the reader's assumed ignorance, the main topics are encapsulated between sketches of Egyptian history till the reign of Ramesses II himself (c.1279-1213 BC) and the aftermath down to the Roman period, as well as the fortunes of Ramesses in later tradition, through Shelley's *Ozymandias* to Cecil B. de Mille's *The Ten Commandments* and beyond. Within this framework, the main parts present the political history of the reign, the huge royal family, administration and economy, religion and the community of workmen at the Deir el-Medina. Throughout, the

author's mastery of his material is evident, and we are given an authoritative and reliable picture of the reign.

Kitchen quotes liberally from the ancient sources (exact references are provided at the back) and is able to give much of the flavour of them, especially in excerpts from correspondence between kings, as when Ramesses replies to a request for birth medicines from the Hittite king: "As for Matnazi, my Brother's sister... Fifty is she? Never! She's sixty for sure!... No one can produce medicine for her to have children. But of course, if the Sun-God and the Storm-God should will it..."

Sometimes this close reliance on the material can be problematic. In his account of the vital but indecisive Battle of Qadesh, Kitchen treats the visual record as an attempt at an accurate topography, whereas Roland Tefenbach has shown how far its organization is symbolic, conveying ideas of Egyptian domination and of the position of the king in a visual form that complements the verbal presentation of similar themes in the texts. The artistic and iconographic implications of this are at least as interesting as the "facts" of the battle, and its relationship with the unquestionable topographical information in the reliefs remains to be worked out.

The same rich citations from the texts continue in the synthesizing chapters on the institutions of the reign. Notable among those is the section on kingship, probably the most judicious, brief statement available anywhere, presented as a reasoned argument rather than a commented selection from the sources.

When it comes to interpreting the surely propagandistic figures for temple holdings of land, personnel and animals, the ground is paradoxically far less solid. A single god's holdings of estate and fiefs in this largely tribal community are given as more than one per cent of the entire local population, in charge of super-cowboys who could handle around 600 beasts each, while "Amon would have given every Egyptian at least one spare donkey for transport when his other one was not available". But despite difficulties of this sort, the presentation of this material from which most scholars and other writers simply shy away, is in itself valuable, and can again give some of the flavour of reality when it is compared with an account of the alleged embezzlement of state property

ty (in which the figures are a little more credible).

The text is interlarded with humorous comments and asides that reflect the author's enjoyment of his subject. These at once distance the subject from the reader and seem to imply that ancient Egypt was really very similar to the modern world—a point Kitchen makes explicitly. To call Ramesses' consultation of the archives as a preliminary to announcing a building project "Research in Theology" is, however, to introduce an alien concept, even if the parallel is not meant too seriously. Kitchen's aim is to entertain, and much that is more imaginative than factual is included (and clearly indicated as such), but such dissonances in tone exemplify a real problem in the presentation of a remote period.

For ancient Egypt there is no continuous or dispassionate account of events or attitudes by a native. By contrast, for Classical antiquity there are texts, which continue to influence the approach of ancient historians, and offer a model of the way in which political or social history of the time can be written. While no historian of Greece is a simple follower of Thucydides, his position is happier than that of the Egyptologist, who has no native mentor and studies a culture that is hardly continuous at all with that of the modern world. No truly satisfactory mode of discourse for analysing Egyptian political history has been established, and it may be impossible to establish one, because the data are too scattered and fragmentary to allow a meaningful continuous narrative, and the sources effectively shield themselves from a study of the motives of the actors.

For one or two periods what can be produced instead is a reasonably detailed description of the society. Dr Kitchen does this very effectively; when he goes further and attributes motives or offers judgments of the success of policies or the worth of kings and administrators, there is really nothing against which such assessments can be measured.

One indicator of the quality and authority of the books that it prompts questions of method of this sort. *Pharaoh Triumphant* sets new standards of accuracy, richness of presentation, and depth of knowledge in popular works. We must be grateful to the author for his full, lively and painstaking work.

Keith Hopkins

FRANK M. SNOWDEN

Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks 164pp. Harvard University Press. £14.80. 0 674 06380 5

The basic message of this short book is that racial prejudice between blacks and whites was a post-classical innovation. The case is argued with full scholarly apparatus, and is illustrated with excellent pictures. The pictures are by far the best part of the book.

Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and early Christians, so Frank M. Snowden claims, were all free from acute colour-consciousness and from all the passions and social problems which cluster round racial hostility. The depiction of Negroes and Nigroids in ancient art from the third millennium BC onwards demonstrates ancient peoples' familiarity with blacks. Black warriors from Nubia (modern Sudan) conquered Egypt and formed the 25th dynasty of Egyptian Pharaohs in the eighth century BC. Close ties and "bonds of genuine friendship" between Egyptians and the black warriors, Outsida the African continent, Negroes were known about in Crete, for example, as early as the second millennium BC. Their appearance, therefore, presented "nothing novel to ancient Mediterranean peoples".

Snowden readily admits that Greek and Roman authors sometimes described African tribes as "barbaric", or worse; the Troglodytes (not to be confused with Troglodytes, who were cave-dwellers, for example, had no voices and made only squeaks. Another tribe, the Blemmyes, had no heads; their eyes and mouths were attached to their chests. But ancient authors also portrayed the Ethiopians, who were the archetypal blacks, as the wisest of men, the fount of wisdom and of Egyptian astrology, ruled over by kings who were the models of justice. Overall, Snowden asserts, the image of the black in ancient art and literature was "essentially favourable".

Three further points are essential to Snowden's thesis. First, "this favourable image" was allegedly based in reality. Egyptians, Greeks

and Romans learned the truth about Ethiopia from Ethiopian ambassadors and from what Herodotus had himself heard when he visited Elephantine in the deep south of Egypt in the mid-fifth century BC. Second, the favourable image prevalent in ancient literature must have had "an enormous impact on the day-to-day attitudes towards blacks" throughout the Mediterranean world. In particular, the historian Diodorus Siculus who wrote that the Ethiopians were the first to honour gods and perform sacrifices, and in his Christian scholar Origen, in his allegorizing commentary on the Song of Songs ("I am black and beautiful" did much to "further a highly favourable image of blacks". Finally, Snowden claims, the black population of the Roman empire was much larger than scholars have traditionally estimated. Therefore, lack of racial prejudice in antiquity was not due to negligible numbers.

The objections are obvious and overwhelming. For example, it is wrong to treat Greeks and Romans as a single entity with uniform attitudes to blacks on the evidence of classical authors read by a few members of the small élite. Origen was the most prolific author of antiquity; his view on black beauty can achieve a prominence in a modern scholar's perspective which it never had, tucked away in a few lines in one of his numerous volumes. And besides, the degree of racial prejudice and economic system. In the American colonies from the seventeenth century (and in the contemporary South Africa), the harshness of racial prejudice was due to a régime of economic exploitation, in which members of one race were systematically denied equal access to goods, comfortable life-style and political power. Their exclusion was justified by beliefs about their inferiority, because of their race. Egyptians, Greeks and Romans did not exploit blacks similarly. But their surviving views on slaves and barbarians suggest that they were not short of derogatory stereotypes.

For a moralizing history with a contemporary political purpose, this may not matter much. Professor Snowden has cleverly created from classical sources a foundation myth for Black History. He has portrayed a "retrospective utopia". This is a good idea, in the beginning it was good: man has willingly destroyed, he could with good will recreate.

Members of the wedding

Edmund Leach

LOUIS DUMONT

Affinity as a Value: Marriage Alliance in South India, with Comparative Essays on Australia 230pp. University of Chicago Press. £17.50. 0 226 16954 2

Louis Dumont's new book will not have the staying power of his widely acclaimed (and much criticized) study of the Indian caste system *Homo Hierarchicus*, or even of his less widely known sequel *From Mandeville to Marx (Homo Aequalis in the French version)*, but professional anthropologists will certainly be grateful to the publishers for bringing together into one place this collection of specialist essays on a common theme which originally appeared in diverse places at various dates between 1952 and 1970.

When Dumont went to South India in 1949 (to engage in a long spell of field research, he had been associated with Claude Lévi-Strauss for many years. He had already read the relevant sections of the latter's as yet unpublished magnum opus, *Les Structures Élémentaires de la parenté*. Subsequently Dumont held a post in Oxford for several years. His personal friendship with the Oxford anthropologists was not matched by any concessions to their intellectual position.

The other essays are likewise

In 1957 he published, in French, a major fieldwork monograph, *Une Société de l'Inde du Sud*, and also, in English, a substantial theoretical essay based on the same materials entitled "Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South Indian Kinship". This now reappears as Chapter Two of the collection can be considered as commentaries or appendices focused around this central piece.

When originally published this essay was dedicated to Lévi-Strauss. It purported to demonstrate that Lévi-Strauss's abstract theorizing was borne out by Dumont's empirical evidence: the demonstration was distinctly tortuous and remains unconvincing even now, though in the present version some weaknesses in the original argument have been clarified by new footnotes and the inclusion of a long new essay entitled "Steaktaking 1981: Affinity as a Value", most of which is devoted to a denunciation of the views of critics of Dumont's original position.

Besides offering a verification of Lévi-Strauss's argument the original version of Chapter Two contained a vehement attack on a position which was then described only as "anthropological thought" but is now specifically identified as Cambridge anthropological thought, as evidenced presumably by the work of Meyer Fortes.

The other essays are likewise

supplemented by updated narration and commentary but are, relatively speaking, minor works. Indeed the two essays on Australian kinship language and marriage rules which conclude the volume seem to me exceptionally bad examples of a now quite outmoded genre of anthropological analysis.

Although parts of Dumont's argument have come to be widely, if not universally, accepted among professional anthropologists, almost all of these essays attracted partly adverse critical comment when they first appeared. Much of this criticism seems to me to have been fully justified but in his present counter-attack Dumont yields no ground at all. He repeatedly insists that he has been right all along and that all subsequent work which has failed to lend support to his argument is full of gross errors.

So what precisely is the issue? Since Dumont himself devoted nearly twenty years, without any great success, to trying to answer that question I cannot get very far on the present occasion, but there are two points which stand out. First, there is the belief that people's feelings about kinship are embedded in language in a very special way; they will not be found in the meanings of individual words but in the relations between words. It is held that the terminology of a kinship system which is in any language forms a closed system which is somehow separated off from the rest of the language. The meanings that are to be attached to

particular items of the vocabulary set are discovered by studying their relationship to other items in the set. The total system of such relationships (which are relationships between categories rather than between individual human beings) constitutes an abstraction which the practitioners concerned refer to as "the kinship system".

Kinship is thus a "thing in itself" and marriage alliance, by which is meant a form of affinity which endures over several generations, is a particular relationship within such systems. Any system as a whole is constituted by a number of possible variables of which marriage alliance is just one, others being descent through the father or descent through the mother, residence after marriage with father's kin or mother's kin or neither or both, and so on; the combination of values attached to the variables constitutes the "structure" of the system in Lévi-Strauss's sense and may be contrasted with alternative possibilities exhibited in the different combinations of values found in other kinship systems, more particularly those of neighbouring societies using the same vocabulary but with alternative values.

The point of Dumont's Chapter Two is that the people under study, all of whom lived in the same vicinity, fell into three distinct named groups and each of the groups was subdivided hierarchically in different ways. Dumont's purpose was to show that the differences, though very marked at the level of empirical fact, should be seen as permutations on a common "structural" theme. The continuity of structure between the different groups and sub-groups is critically dependent on the value attached to marriage alliance which persists throughout.

Since I myself do not agree that kinship is "a thing in itself" in this way, or that the vocabulary of kinship has any special quality which allows it to be used as a permutation set for purposes of cross-cultural comparison, there is little that I can say except to express my astonishment that Dumont should still feel so attached to the arguments which he put forward a quarter of a century ago.

The other key point running through these essays is a polemical debate with certain British anthropologists, especially those who were trained by Meyer Fortes in the 1950s, about the relative status of "descent" and "marriage alliance" as determinants of the structural form of simple societies. Although the whole argument now seems very outdated I am here on the side of Dumont rather than Fortes, or, more generally, I am on the side of the "alliance theorists" rather than the "descent theorists".

The reader who does not already know his way around this hair-splitting verbal jungle will find the core of it spelled out in pages 71-72 of Dumont's book. British structural-functional anthropology of the 1950s era was built around the proposition that the key units in simple societies are corporate

groups ("lineages") whose solidarity is based on belief in descent from a common ancestor. On this view marriage creates and expresses a permanent relationship of alliance between individuals and such affinity endures only while the marriage itself endures. The affinity relations created by marriage, being temporary, are quite subsidiary to the consanguine relationships established by descent, which endure from generation to generation.

The contrary proposition of the alliance theorists is that, at least in some empirical social systems, marriage creates and expresses a permanent relationship of alliance between whole corporate groups and, in such cases, "alliance" is just as much a part of the ongoing structure as is "descent". Dumont goes further than that. He is not greatly interested in such notions as social solidarity; he is concerned with ideology rather than social organization, with "structure" as conceived by Lévi-Strauss rather than by Radcliffe-Brown. Hence, in his usage, the concepts of "descent" and "marriage alliance" form a mutually interdependent binary pair the "value" of which varies according to the conventions as to which particular relatives (as defined by the kinship vocabulary) should or should not marry one another.

The interest of such arguments is now mainly historical; I do not know of any of my younger British anthropological colleagues who still get hot and bothered about such matters, but for Dumont, it seems, they are still live issues. At page 144 he is just as hostile to C. J. Fuller, who in 1976 suggested that there might be merit on both sides, as he was when he attacked Radcliffe-Brown on the original issue back in 1953.

Any non-anthropologist reader is likely to find the whole debate very strange, but although the arguments which are here revived may not now seem to be of any great importance the case was quite different when they were first presented. At that time these essays helped to create a shift in anthropological perspective which was very much needed. It may be that today the most interesting of the younger anthropologists are arguing about quite different issues but, even so, this book deserves a place in every serious anthropological library.

Cambridge University Press have now issued in paperback an abridged edition of *Mythologies, Diseases and Ancient Cultures*, edited by Aidan and Eve Cockburn (243pp. £9.95. 0 521 27237 8). Originally published in 1980, the work is arranged in three sections: "Mummies of Egypt", "Mummies of the Americas" and "Mummies of the World", and considers such aspects as "Dental Health in Ancient Egypt", "Aleutian and Alaskan Mummies" and "Bog Bodies of Denmark".

With the Rawats

David Pocock

G. M. CARSTAIRS
Death of a Witch: A Village in North India 1950-1981 144pp. Hutchinson. £9.95. 0 09 153240 0

G. M. Carstairs was born in India, the son of missionaries, but his first contact with the country was in 1950 when, for six months, he applied personally to villagers in the Rawats. The results of this and later work were published in 1957 as *The Witch of the Village*. It is good to see that the new edition has doubts about the value of such research.

Since the 1950s he has kept in touch with the villagers despite his pre-occupation as Professor of Psychiatry at the University of York and President of the World Federation of Mental Health. The book is a recollection of his experience of the village over the

years, very much in the tradition of reminiscence and anecdote created by retired ICS officers and missionaries.

It would be heavy-handed to treat it as a social anthropological monograph; it doesn't pretend to be that. Nor is it a study of witchcraft (the title, I suspect was chosen by the publisher). Professor Carstairs takes no account of the substantial literature on this interesting subject in his discussion and cites only a few articles on it in a generally rather skimpy bibliography. The witch referred to in the title was an old woman in the village who died a few days after having been beaten up by three men using an axe — two of them served a month in prison and one of them a year. She had a sharp tongue and was reputed to have caused sickness and death. There is some suggestion that a simmering resentment between families may have contributed to her death; while her son was in the army in Iraq he had worked hard to preserve his inheritance from rapacious relatives, of whom two, at least, were her murderers. But although Carstairs busied himself with

the affair, seeing both parties, talking to the magistrate and so on, we don't really come to understand either the complex of beliefs or motives behind the murder; the ease with which her son seems to have reconciled himself to both her death and to those who killed her remains no less opaque. Apart from a later chapter called "Ghosts, Ghosts and Magical Powers" — a title very much in the tradition of the older literature — the episode is not much referred to after Chapter Two.

The remaining chapters, many of which read like separate essays, describe family loyalties and squabbles, the growth of literacy, changes in agriculture, the spread of communication with, as one would expect, some emphasis on the medical side of village life. But it is all thin, overnarrative, there is no depth of understanding, no sense of real engagement with either people or topics. Even where we might expect the author to have the greatest intellectual interest — the relation of medicine and anthropology — he offers us only the bland and unobjectionable

assertion that the two disciplines "can profitably learn from each other" and no demonstration of this potentially exciting interaction.

One cannot doubt Professor Carstairs's commitment to the people of India, his affection for his villagers and his concern for their well-being. Unfortunately his style is vapid; affection becomes sentimental regard and concern a desultory interest. The concluding paragraph is a fair sample of his manner and from it readers can decide whether this is their sort of book or not.

There are moments like this, during sessions of fervent hymn-singing and in relaxed, leisurely conversations, which make one feel that in spite of their hard work and near-paternalistic concern a desultory interest. The concluding paragraph is a fair sample of his manner and from it readers can decide whether this is their sort of book or not.

NEW PAPERBACKS

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BBC
PUBLICATIONS

How mad, if at all, was Ezra Pound? And how much, if at all, of a traitor? The more often debated question of his opinions versus his poetic and literary gift has obscured these basic issues, to some extent, down the years. Now, a forthcoming book based on clinical records has reopened the whole matter. By means of the Freedom of Information Act, Dr E. Fuller Torrey of St Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington DC, has been able to obtain many of Pound's medical records. There is going to be quite a squabble over *The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secret of St Elizabeth's* (McGraw-Hill).

The book is replete with allegations, many of them made in a suggestive rather than a documented way. One is given the impression, at the least, that Pound's distinguished literary friends more or less "fixed" for him to be awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1949 as a means of embarrassing the US government. It is implied that Dr Winifred Overholser, who had charge of him, was far too solicitous, on too little evidence, of Pound's mental state. (For, as long as he was "mad", he could not be strangled for treason.) There is the clear implication that women—Sheri Martineau and Marcella Spann—were allowed into St Elizabeth's in order to console Pound sexually. In depicting his eventual release it is said sarcastically that "the insane asylum had served nicely as refuge and showpiece; it had all been, in the words of a friend, 'a tale told by an Eliot, full of Pound and fry, signifying nothing'." Dr Fuller Torrey seems here to have been tempted, by the felicity of the quotation, into a conclusion at odds with the book. It's never suggested elsewhere that the whole argument is nugatory.

Contentions present themselves straightaway. James L. Laughlin, a friend of Pound's since the old days in Rapallo, the agent for his estate, and still his publisher at New Directions, is incensed by what he described to me as the "unethical" use, by a physician, of hospital records. Furthermore, he states that Pound was mentally quite incapable of standing trial and that it was only the unperturbed care of Dr Overholser, who died thirteen years ago, that enabled him to function in the institution at all. The Bollingen Prize, bestowed for the Pisan Cantos, was not in his judgement "rigged" at all and the people concerned with the award (Auden, Eliot, Lowell, Allen Tate,

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Conrad Aiken were "not the type" to have done so. He dismisses the story about the women out of hand — "one had to be let in by a warden with a key and supervised during the visit. Dr Overholser would never have allowed it."

There seem to be three debates going on at once. First, was Pound guilty of treason? If not, or even if, was he mad? Third, was he given privileged treatment for either condition? The first question is the easiest. By making his broadcasts where and when he did, Pound was legally guilty of treason; though similar statements about Roosevelt and the Jewish conspiracy were made by numerous people in America with constitutional impunity. As to his sanity, it seems that Pound, while no physical danger to others or to himself, was unfit to plead and would, if indicted, have broken down as he did at Pisa. (The two questions may be directly connected, since antisemitism of the Pound type is thought by many psychiatrists to be a symptom of advanced paranoia.) Alfred Kazin's generous diagnosis of "a mind in trouble" and James Laughlin's friendly attribution of the term "batty" both serve equally well here. The fact that Pound, under Dr Overholser's tuition and supervision, so far recovered as to execute two Confucian translations and a version of Sophocles, does not mean that he was faking. Dr Fuller Torrey at least insinuates that much of his eccentricity was faked, but all Pound's visitors, including committed haters of his opinions, attest that he was often quite barmy.

As for the question of special or privileged treatment, it can be argued that Pound was handled more harshly than other fascist collaborators, and also less so. He never stood trial, and was never really incarcerated. He was, however, isolated at St Elizabeth's. Dr Fuller Torrey describes the hospital rather whimsically as "a sacrificial altar for savants" — but he was in confinement long after other rabid broadcasters had been released. He had also to live with continual

uncertainty about his status and his future. One makes these points with a conscious effort at fairness, because all of the new and old evidence suggests that Pound acted as a continuous solvent on the sympathy of his friends. He never for a moment abandoned his Jew-hating and even began, while in hospital, a fresh relationship with a white supremacist brute named John Kasper, well described by Ernest Hemingway in a letter to Archibald MacLeish as a "dangerous flaming jerk". The letters from William Carlos Williams show an almost superlunary patience, often expressed in an impatient style, to "dear Ezra". "No one forgives you for what you did, everyone forgives you for what you are," and for God's sake you didn't expect anyone to listen to your foul-mouthed broadcasts did you? Pound's friends found him a trial even when they were attempting to save him from one.

The literary evidence for insanity is, of necessity, very debatable. Some might find arguments in the later cantos for what James Laughlin calls the "acute panic" of which the asylum partially cured him. The state of psychiatric opinion on matters like schizophrenia and narcissism was, in that period, inchoate. The letters that Pound wrote were often confused and elliptical, almost indecipherable as well as nasty, but he achieved lucidity and productivity too.

It's very rarely that one can use the Catch-22 metaphor with any precision, but it obviously took a lot of devoted work to get Pound declared insane in order that he might be released from an asylum. Indeed, T. S. Eliot complained at one stage that Ezra did "not want to accept freedom on any terms that are possible." The ambiguity of the eventual diagnosis still survives. It is complicated, in the present context, by the notoriety of Soviet horror clinics for "deluded" dissidents. And it still raises the uneasy question, which is not suggested by many other cases, of how genius and fascist can coexist in one person. In that respect, anyway, Pound's

uniqueness comes as a relief. The verdict of "guilty but insane" will be the retrospective one which vindicates Pound's friends and condemns his opinions.

So far, the promised bonanza from electronic publishing has not materialized to redeem the situation. But, as Robert Dahlin reports in his review of this field, there has been a "first" to record. The Source, a data base company in Virginia owned by the publisher of the first electronic novel *Blind Phoenix* (written by Burke Campbell, on an Apple II personal computer, in just under 72 hours), has been "published" for Source subscribers later in the day of its completion. It could be read on the screen, or printed out for as little as \$2.03. It was said to have great narrative drive. Why does this not delight me?

In his rather guardedly pessimistic "overview", PW's editor John Baker does not confine himself to market indicators only. He describes "the very general impression, of publishers and agents alike, that it was becoming more and more difficult to find strong, publishable manuscripts." Some attributed it to the apparently English, others to a hostile economy that leaves little time or energy for anything not directly connected with making a living; but whatever the cause, most editors were professing themselves alarmed at the paucity of good work, rather than at the amount they were having to turn away.

The frontiers of free expression, set wider in the United States than in any other country, were felt to be undergoing slight but worrisome contractions in the period under review. The present administration is decidedly less friendly to the Freedom of Information Act, and has interpreted it in ways that restrict access by independent authors and researchers. The use of libel suits against novelists, by persons fancying themselves portrayed in fiction, seems somehow un-American but is on the increase. By contrast, most local

recheck efforts to purge public libraries have been successfully challenged in the courts. Even so, the President made such triumphs slightly exiguous by sponsoring a budget which would eliminate all Federal support for libraries in the first place. Such are the outlines of pressure by which the book world is, according to PW, constrained.

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Books in Czechoslovakia

Sir, — We are tuning to your periodical concerned with literature and cultural values and asking urgently for your help and support. We would like to bring to your attention the constant and continuous destruction of literary and scientific books in Czechoslovakia comparable to the destruction of Czech books during the Nazi occupation.

During house searches concerning alleged "incitement" or "activity against the republic", literary works, poetry, translations, philosophy and books on social and physical sciences are being confiscated. Some of these books published in Czechoslovakia in broad, socialist editions or pamphlets and their copies. Police are ignorant about literary activity arbitrarily confiscate whatever they fancy.

There are hundreds of literary, scientific and theological authors, as well as journalists, unable to publish for political reasons. Many have been silenced effectively to silence since 1948 with a brief respite at the end of the 1960s. Many have lost the right to publish since 1969. Forbidden authors are only one avenue of contact with the public, by using socialist underground, typewritten editions, eg. *Kvart*, *Expedice*, etc. Thousands of books have been hidden in this way, on effort requiring considerable sacrifice and courage, as such an activity may become the subject of criminal prosecution.

Where criminal proceedings are taken against the owners of books or against the owners of literature, as is evidence of the anti-state activity. Even if the accused are released, confiscated material is never returned. If the accused insist on their place, where the confiscation is confirmed, we believe that confiscated materials are destroyed. Book vandalism damages our culture and heritage. Original manuscripts, sometimes years of patient work, cannot be replaced. An example of cultural vandalism is a collection of poems by a well-known author, Jaroslav Seifert, *Urbicula from Píseň*, as well as his autobiography, in spite of the fact that his books were recently officially published.

The most painful example is the case of the writer Dr. Svatava who was sentenced to March 1983 at the Prague Regional Court for "incitement to the overthrow of the socialist system on the basis of the fact that he copied a poem by Alexander Pushkin, published in Czechoslovakia as well as the USSR, which is removed from the public library. The court, expert in literature, Dr. Kola from the Olomouc University, stated that the poem "is strongly anti-Soviet" and that it was never published in the USSR. The wife of Dr. Svatava, during the interval in the court hearing, rushed to the local library where she borrowed the poem. The poem was evaluated as a "political" picture of the short-term of Soviet life. Although Dr. Svatava was still sentenced to five months imprisonment, he could give a number of similar examples of political justifications.

What unites these disparate events is an elegant compromise between academic preoccupation and quality journalism, as well as the appointment of their own Security of tenure may indeed be the secret of *Paritien Review's* long life. The academic resource brought to bear on any recent issue of the journal, the continued existence of the independent writer and editor, some importance, terrifyingly, some symptoms of that hunger which makes statements not born down in complacency and comfort.

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'Rienzi'

Sir, — In a predictable slum at *Rienzi* (Commentary, October 14) Michael Tanner has got it wrong. Winifred Wagner did not give the *Rienzi* score to Hitler. It was presented to him by a group of industrialists in 1939 on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday. He was also given the scores of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, as well as other autographs now lost. There is no evidence that Hitler valued the *Rienzi* score more than the others. But his reported statements about the work, and the use of bits of it for Nazi rallies and newscasts, make his possession of the autograph just a little uneasy.

Tanner thinks that *Rienzi's* long-suffering benevolence has nothing to do with modern totalitarianism. Surely benevolence, or the appearance of it, is one of the subtlest tricks of any totalitarian regime. Hitler's long-suffering letters to Roehm betrayed nothing of the brutal SA purge that followed. Nor did the Hitler of the Berlin Olympic Games exactly convey the impression of a warmongering ogre. In the opera *Rienzi's* enemies are pardoned once. What Tanner doesn't say is that they are slaughtered in the third act, and with the argument that "clemency has made them more punishable. If we destroy them now, we'll be justified in the eyes of the world."

The appalling weaknesses of *Rienzi* make the appallingly arrogant genius who wrote it for this listener more sympathetic. But there is enough of the opera in print now for Tanner to know that some of its "private" moments (unfortunately omitted in the otherwise depressingly convincing EMO production) are as good as anything in Verdi's *Macbeth*. For Tanner's remark that it is "a devastating comment on the bankruptcy of mid-nineteenth-century grand opera" there can be only one devastating (and benevolent) punishment: one hundred rewritings of *Rienzi* — all of it.

JOHN DEATHRIDOE
King's College, Cambridge.

Darlan's Death

Sir, — Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker reproves me in your issue of October 14 for saying that the men who shot Admiral Darlan was acting on SOE's orders. Sir Douglas tells us in his *Setting Europe Ablaze* that this man was an officer of SOE's, explains at some length how he came to be carrying an SOE pistol, and adds that his superior was "taken to safety" after the assassination. If he does not want us to believe that the admiral was shot by SOE, he invites us to believe that SOE's discipline was unbelievably slack.

Namier said once that a great many profound secrets are already in print. If you know where to look for them. The fact that this in print since 1947, tucked away in the posthumous diaries of a Junior Officer in the Irish Guards who became a DSO with SOE in France before being killed in action with his regiment in Normandy. He wrote that in the course of his SOE training he "had already been acquainted with the assassin of Darlan and knew of the existence of similar briefings" (*High Dromer's Diaries*, Cape, 1947, page 135). Presumably the assassin he met was the one "taken to safety", as the other had promptly been denounced by a firing squad.

M. R. D. FOOT
88 Heath View, London N2.

'The Borders of Vision'

Sir, — May I as a postscript to Norman Friedman's generous praise of *The Borders of Vision* (October 7) come briefly to the aid of my fellow victim of David Brown's "Septem-ber 97" There is I suppose no reason why reviewers should be previous work in the field, however, has his disavowals. It must have grieved Robert Osborn to learn that in standing too

to the editor

their head earlier accounts of the composition of *The Borders* he was being "unadventurously fair"; that his being in of the *Caleb Williams* father-son relationship with the evolution of the play adds "nothing" to our understanding of Godwin and Wordsworth; that his learned and interesting discussion of source material from Schiller and others (a departure incidentally from previous Cornell practice) offers merely "a safe guide to some of the Shakespeare borrowings".

The sneer is surely quite as characteristic a mark of Mr Brown's critical mode as the snarl-and-bolt is degrading. The least that can be expected from a reviewer is serious attention to the work in hand — the willingness to read it, and to give a just account of what it contains. In Mr Brown's disproportionately long review one looks for this in vain.

The great strength of the Cornwell Wordsworth series is to present photographs, transcriptions and texts of both early and late versions of a given poem, thus for the first time enabling scholars to assess for themselves the changes and distinctions. It is depressing therefore to find that Mr Brown has clearly no understanding of the difference between 1796-7 and the play as finally published in 1842. Mr Osborn writes cogently on the subject in his Introduction, and of course makes both texts available for his readers. My guess is that Mr Brown is knave rather than fool, but he may have which title he prefers. JONATHAN WORDSWORTH
St Catherine's College, Oxford.

'On Translation'

Sir, — I trust that Michael Glenny (in the symposium on translation, October 14) uses the term "anonymous Jacobean divines" to mean that their names do not appear on the title page of the Authorized Version of the Bible.

Credit for the idea is commonly accorded to John Rainolds (or Reynolds), the Puritan leader at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 and President of this College. Among other translators were his successor, John Spencer (or Spencer), President from 1607 to 1614, who worked with the translators at Westminster; and Miles Smith, another Corpus man and sometime Bishop of Gloucester.

Other men whose names ought to be noted are Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, and the Regius Professors of Hebrew at the two Universities, Edward Lively and John Harding.

MARK HARRIS
Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Angela Thirkell

Sir, — My attention has been drawn to the two following statements about my late mother Angela Thirkell in Gavin Ewart's review of Tony Grouse's book *Inside Outsider* (September 16). Neither is true:

When her daughter Mary died at less than a year old in 1918, she didn't want to know. She ignored the funeral.

Her offhand treatment of her three sons shows her to have been a very selfish woman.

I am one of my mother's three sons and she gave me nothing but love and affection. The daughter of the children's nanny has confirmed that my mother was not absent from my half-sister's funeral because she did not want to know. She was absent because she was shattered by the child's death.

Mother and daughter are buried side by side in Rottingdean churchyard. We held our annual service of remembrance there recently. The occasion, which should have been a happy one, was seriously marred by these inaccurate and distasteful comments.

LANCE THIRKELL
31 Lansdowne Road, London W11.

"Among this week's contributors" appears on page 1172.

A Herbert Sonnet

Sir, — May I suggest that if we entertain Sir Edmund Chambers's preferred identification of the boy of Shakespeare's Sonnets with William, Lord Herbert, then we have in one of Herbert's own poems what looks like an account of the boy's first meeting with the woman of the Sonnets? The text of the poem, in his *Poems* (1660), is:

Yet was her Beauty as the Blushing Rose.
And greedy passionate was my desire.
And Time and Place, my reconciled Foes,
Did with my wish, and her consent conspire:
Why then o're-remless of my Loves
So eagerly pursu'd with rough intent.
So dearly purchas'd with perform'd condition
Kept I my rude Virginity unsent?
Did she not sweetly kiss? and sweetly sing?
And sweetly play? and all to move my pleasure?
And every dalliance use, and everything,
And show my sullen Eyes her naked Treasure?

All this she did, I wittfully forbore;
And why? Because methought she was an whore.

The sonnet form suggests an early date and this is confirmed by the reference to Herbert's virginity which he had lost by 1599. In terms of the temperamental shown by his life-long womanizing, his visit to London about his proposed marriage in 1595 (his sixteenth year) would not be too early for this adventure.

There are a number of correspondences to the situation in the Sonnets. The red rose suggests a brunette rather than a blonde. The woman plays (Sonnet 128) and sings (Sonnet 141) and is very much the wooer (Sonnet 41). The word "whore" does not mean that she was a prostitute (something that Herbert would not merely have thought, but known). What is implied is that she was an immoral woman, as when Doctor Johnson said of the divorced Lady Diana Spencer, "the woman's a whore and there's an end on't". Herbert's refusal was not moral but prudential and the twist in the poem is that the very prudishness that made her inaccessible also made her dangerous.

The character of the young Herbert shows interestingly. He had enough poetic ability and eye for a situation to make him, young as he was, a not unworthy first reader of the Sonnets. At the same time he showed a self-confidence and a touch of brutality in keeping with the boy who made Shakespeare pass "a hell of a time". The identification must of course remain speculative but it fits well here. At worst the poem shows how a lively young aristocrat thought and behaved in such a situation; at something more, it gives some further light on the two shadowy figures in the triangle.

H. W. PIPER
School of English and Linguistics,
Macquarie University, North Ryde,
New South Wales, Australia.

'The Beggar's Opera'

Sir, — I should be very grateful if you would allow me to appeal to your readers to enlighten me on a question concerning *The Beggar's Opera* which has long puzzled me.

Open any book on eighteenth-century literature, or read any theatre critic's review of a new production, and you are almost bound to find words to the following effect: "Of course modern readers, or audiences, cannot appreciate Gay's masterpiece as fully as it should be appreciated because it contains so many witty and cruel allusions to contemporary politics which entirely escape them." What I should like to know is: what allusions?

To begin with, the work does not look like a *roman à clef*. To illustrate what I mean, let me take an example from a near-contemporary. Imagine an intelligent Japanese, knowing English perfectly but completely ignorant of eighteenth-century history, who sits down to read *Gulliver's Travels*. As soon as he comes to Part I, Chapter 3, and reads about Flimnap the Treasurer

performing on the high tightrope he feels sure that some real person is intended; he might even wonder whether the cushion that broke his fall had some equivalent in reality. Then he turns to a commentary and finds that indeed Flimnap is meant for Sir Robert Walpole and the cushion for the Duchess of Kendal. But where in *The Beggar's Opera* is there a passage that arouses similar suspicions?

There is one place where it always seemed to me, and Sir John Plumb has confirmed, that some allusion might lurk. In Act 1, Scene 3, Peachum is reading aloud from a list of his gang. With emphasis and relish he rolls round his tongue "Robin of Bagshot, alias Gorgon, alias Bluff Bob, alias Carbuncle, alias Bob Booty". Sir John Plumb explains that this string of abusive nicknames would have been at once applied to Walpole. No doubt there were roars of laughter in the theatre, but I still feel no further forward. If Bob Booty is Walpole, as he certainly is and if, as most commentators tell me, the whole force of the satire is directed against Walpole, then no doubt Bob Booty, thus early introduced, is going to be the hero, or anti-hero, of the whole opera? Well, no; a mere name in a catalogue, he never appears on stage and is never even alluded to again; reasonably enough, because Peachum's last word on the subject is that he has decided that Bob Booty shall be hanged at the next session. The trail goes cold before it has even become hot.

Some years ago I put the same question to my friend Romney Sedgwick, a great authority on eighteenth-century politics. He instantly quoted: "That Jenny Twitche, should peach me, I own surpris'd me" (Act 3, Scene 14). These were the words in which Lord Sandwich in 1763 was reproached for having turned against his one-time intimate friend John Wilkes, and the nickname Jenny Twitche stuck to Sandwich from then on. But this is the opposite of what I am looking for: Sandwich was only ten years old when *The Beggar's Opera* was produced and the nickname does not appear until Gay had been dead for twenty-one years.

I hope that someone may be able to answer my question, at least in part. Until they do, while I shall remain open to conviction by supporters of the traditional line, I shall continue to wonder whether some people who have written on the subject may have got their ideas the wrong way round. Is it the case that *The Beggar's Opera* is crammed with political allusions, or is it rather that, after it had won its enormous popularity, political partisans began to say that Walpole and Townsend were no better than Peachum and Lockit?

DAVID HUNT
The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, London SW1.

'Commando'

Sir, — To his review of *Commando* by Denitys, *Revue* (September 16) Geoffrey Wheatcroft harshly criticizes the British for shooting Boers found in British uniform. But he does not present the issue fairly. Reitz himself recounts an incident (page 250) of my 1968 Faber edition) when two British soldiers were killed by Boers dressed in British uniforms, at least partly because the British hesitated to fire on men wearing the uniforms of their colleagues. As Reitz put it, "the wearing of British uniforms had without doubt been the proximate cause of the death of these two men". What were the British authorities to make of this? The whole issue of the wearing of civilian clothing or enemy uniforms by guerrillas is discussed in Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (1960, Pelican, pp. 182-4) which specifically refers to this incident. Walzer appears to think that the killing of the British soldiers justifies Kitchener's order that Boers captured in khaki should be shot. Kitchener certainly used the justification, according to Reitz.

M. J. HORSMAN
9 Nibbels Road, London SE18.

Author, Author

Competition No 145

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, November 11. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct — in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1A 9EQ, and marked "Author, Author 145" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of November 18.

1 Nicholas was not to be of the party; he was in disgrace. Only that morning he had refused to eat his wholesome bread-and-milk on the seemingly frivolous grounds that there was a frog in it. And when he had better people had told him that there could not possibly be a frog in his bread-and-milk and that he was not to talk nonsense, the dramatic part of the incident was that there really was a frog in Nicholas's basin of bread-and-milk; he had put it there himself so he felt entitled to know something about it.

2 There's the boy was the best of us at first, though you can't understand what he's saying, speaking as he does where he came from. Nasty, isn't it? Well, he had but he didn't do much that you could call harm, not till he'd seen me kill the goose.

3 B — at that time was a young plumpness of some nine summers, in appearance a miniature edition of his father and in soul and temperament a combination of Dead End Kid and army mule: a freckled, hard-boiled character with a sadistic eye and a mouth which, when not occupied in

eating, had a cynical twist to it. He spoke little as a general thing, but when he did speak seldom failed to find a chuck in the armour.

Competition No 141

Winner: Kevin J.P. Maynard

Answers:

1 He was so jolly of his joyfines, and summat chiggered.

His lik liked him: light, he loved the lassie.

Author to long live or to long sit, so-blessed him his yong blood and his brynn wyldie.

Sir Gavina and the Green Knight, lines 85-9.

2 Ipse ego Dardania Rutupina per aquora puppes.

Dicam, & Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniae.

Brennuncque Arvirgumque duces, praeuque Bellinum.

Et tandem Amyntoc Britannum subitum, gressibus Arturo facili, trahebat, gressibus Arturo facili, trahebat.

Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorgone arma.

Merlin dolus.

Milton, "Epitaphium Demetrii", lines 162-68.

3 Anthony Blaine, Mortdred; they are all gone.

Among the muffled galleries of bones, By the long barrows of Logges they are made one.

And over their city stand the pinnacles of corn.

Geoffrey Hill, "Merlin".

The Overlook Press Foundation has announced details of the Frederick A. Norton Travelling Fellowship for 1984. Further details will appear in the Overlook Press Foundation's 1984 Yearbook, Road to Knowledge, published in 1984.

The periodicals, 5: Partisan Review

Douglas Dunn

WILLIAM PHILLIPS (Editor)

Partisan Review Volume 50 Number 3

480pp. University of Wisconsin Press, \$4.

ISSN 0040 2426

Boston University is the present home of *Partisan Review* and where it has flourished for almost fifty years. William Phillips, now in his mid-seventies, is professor of English. The current issue opens with a symposium on "Writers in Exile" held in Boston in May of last year, chaired by Daniel Bell and introduced by Phillips. Among those who took part were Vassily Aksyonov, Viktor Nekrasov, Eugen Loeb, Jan Kott, Pavel Litvinov and Efim Etkind; that is, four Russians, a Slavonian and a Pole.

To listen to the voices of these exiled writers is to fill out an incomplete Partisan knowledge of *Partisan Review's* conspicuously left-wing beginnings. It brings on a numb sensation of disbelief, not only, or not chiefly, in *Partisan Review* or its editors, or the political fervour or sheer presence of mind — which must surely have contributed to the magazine's survival and longevity, but in the century, its deceptions and disfigurements. No doubt it, like thought, have to be frightened by what one reads; such, at any rate, is the prevailing mood of British and American criticism. It is perhaps that definition of cynicism which these dissenting East European writers and intellectuals deplore in their colleagues in the West. Some of them say so; but their scepticism can be felt, though the symposium in the uncertainty of style in an otherwise unproblematic series of testimonies. Vassily Aksyonov's voice here is particularly strong, clear and

mischievous. His irony is remarkably candid and the eloquence with which he spells out his crippling "gratitude" to the Soviet Union is among the most disturbing documents on this stifling subject which I have read. "I would like to express my profound gratitude to my former rulers, as well as to Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, for helping me to become a writer. I have never desired any other destiny."

Partisan Review's line on its early association with the Communist Party and the John Reed Clubs of America (of which it was once an official magazine) appears to be that it understood Marxism as a "method of analysis" and contested all along the official Communist notion of art as an instrument of political propaganda. It is clear, however, that the magazine was, or certainly came to be, anti-Stalinist, a process of mental washing that has continued apace; to the extent that one wonders more cynically than is perhaps necessary at why no Latin or South American or South African exiles and witnesses were invited to take part and the conference limited to East European dissidence. Looking back on *Partisan Review's* editorials of the 1930s, one notices that they seem written on principles very similar to those exposed by Efim Etkind in his symposium speech, which he calls "Some Thoughts on the Literary Life and Living Literature." (Figs being such a feature of our current British literary scene where, in poetry at least, they go under the name of "polemics", we might be braced by a little home-brewed analysis on this subject.) Soviet literature, Etkind demonstrates, throw us a headlong bouquet of a full-fledged official subject ("The Image of the Communist in Soviet Literature") to prove respectability in quarters where that sort of resonance is known to count. That, though, is what one sees in *Partisan Review's* early

editorials where the right sentiment of Marxism and Left opposition politics read as pretext for pinning what staff wanted while flattery to grimmer supporters with their various seriousness.

That an American magazine of the kind of pedigree should have outlived the agony of the American Left is the little short of miraculous. Since the turning of its early affiliations, *Partisan Review* can be seen to have behaved itself with an exemplary literary behaviour. Poetry and fiction are always good as a useful and unambiguous cultural as opposed to political identity. John Ashbery's "consultant" to the magazine, and Derek Walcott's "poetry consultant"

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practices, or "research" usually revises itself; and, in attempting past horrors into the present, the other hand, for this or other permanence is in record. "Recognition" is deemed reward for knowledge and must be earned. The scientific community is much troubled by the memory of its salts and

thoughtful student of science is much inspiration in a lot of discoveries, clinging to establish priorities, natural human interest in details, a desire to put order on the bare bones of experiment and

Unfortunately, myth is that genuine history as element to the rising tide: it is all too easy to see the creative episodes in successful scientists. might they were not to get as everybody else did, of

communalism, and the distinct professional science in nineteenth century, for example, was but this was employment in especially in Germany open competition. This is an inspiring young as appreciate the real tradition that is more collective

For those uncovering it, fascinating discipline and richness of laboratory notebooks of poor or forgotten worth Victorian Britain vainly to elucidate structure of before the time they don't get any published and authentic tones of faith," despair,

But the thoughtful student of science would not find much inspiration in mere chronicle of discoveries, citing publications to establish priorities. There is a natural human interest in biographical details; a desire to puff flesh and blood on the bare bones of observation, experiment and hypothesis. Unfortunately, myth is more effective than genuine history as an encouragement to the rising generation. It is all too easy to concentrate on the creative episodes in the lives of successful scientists, showing how right they were not to get things wrong (as everybody else did, of course).

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directly engaged in the history of science as a literature. It has such depth of texture and personal involvement that it reads like Joe Boggess, the novelist of provincial midwesterners struggling to update the chemical "barbaros" sugar, far more ripe, of course, so anywhere, and never got to you will hear the of curiosity, obsession, and even temporary

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yet closely adapted to
social realities of our

Tom Disch

From Ballyjamesduff and back

George Craig

Anthony Cronin

The Life of Riley
233pp. Allison and Busby. £8.95.
(Paperback: Faber. £3.25).
0 85031 540 9

This re-issue of an Irish novel which appeared in 1964 comes trailing clouds of glowing review-phrases from that time: "comic triumph", "hilariously serious... gorgeously funny", "a splendidly comic imagination" (this last from the TLS). For the reviewer now, the choice seems clear: either join the chorus or reveal yourself for an envious curmudgeon. But perhaps the combination "comic" and "1964" will let it offer other possibilities. The coin of "hilariously serious" goes on to say "Far funnier than *Lucky Jim*". True, cruel, raw, rude, nasty. Sexual intercourse, Mr Larkin has reminded us, was invented about that time, or not long before, and the row of excited epithets suggests more than anything else a celebration of that invention. It is certainly a puzzling emphasis in 1983, for *The Life of Riley* has little about it of the sexual romp.

Authorial licence is in fact of a different and older kind: a preface in which Riley's doings are given out as "edited" from a "found" manuscript. The world, topographical and human, in which Riley moves is invariably, if variously, seedy. He is successively a sort of clerk, hanger-on of a demented

aristocrat, editor of a little magazine (all this in or near Dublin), then, in London, hanger-on of an expatriate Ulsterman with BBC connections, object of corrective therapy for a tough heftiness, finally outcast. There is some emphasis on his lodgings, usually dismal, rather more on his drinking, as heavy as his or others' means will allow; and a great deal on the company he keeps, which runs for the most part from the oak to the pretentious by way of the eccentric. Riley is widely assumed to be a poet but expresses as little inclination for writing as for any other kind of work.

Now the preface begins: "This apparent account of about two years of his life was found among the late Patrick Riley's socks...". In other words, we are in for a funny novel, in which linguistic fastidiousness ("apparent account") will go with anti-romantic ordinariness ("socks"). Nor is the name random: for anyone from Ireland, Paddy Riley belongs in a song (to borrow words from another Irishman) "of more than usually revolting sentimentality". We don't have long to wait to discover that the present Riley combines linguistic fastidiousness with anti-romantic ordinariness and is surrounded by sentimentalists of every kind. His status as scrounger allows room for the deployment of the first on the second and third, while his implied or claimed innocence gives a bearing on the deviousness, stupidity or malice of virtually everyone else.

These contrasts do create funny moments, such as this (of native

scroungers as handled by left-wing English Bohemians): "It was during the months preceding the leap into whole-time begging that your turf-cutter or plumber's mate was most prosperous. What with linings of free drink, Connemara sweaters and editions of Marx or Bakunin being showered on him he had little or no use for his own money."

Discriminations of this kind, a comparable attentiveness to the speech-habits of all and sundry, add only the inishry and the recipe looks fine. Disconcertingly, it doesn't work. Foxy turf-cutters, mad squires, liberated women, ageing revolutionaries, progress with cultural aspirations, BBC men from "the black North" with a manic insistence on Celticism of the mist-that-does-he-un-the-bog kind, who make programmes about leprechauns: all are made to talk or act their way into contemptible grotesquerie, their quirks documented at what soon comes to seem wearisome length. The Paddy Riley who continually protests his innocence has a peculiarly baleful eye and unforgiving ear. If, in his few brushes with women, the implicit contempt is less blatant, it is still there in his victim-status. With only Riley to set against an army of knaves and fools, the novel loses direction: there are too many of these slow executions for it to be really funny, there is too little of Riley for it to be satirical.

"The manuscript" ends as, penniless and friendless, Riley says "I had absolutely no place to go." But maybe he made it back to Ballyjamesduff.

A place of reeks and grunts

David Profumo

J. P. McDonagh
The Chammying Worm
221pp. Edinburgh: Canongate. £7.95.
0 96241 039 8

Macandrew, the anti-hero of this unusual first novel, is the Presbyterian minister in a Scottish township called Ferlie. He and his lascivious, flame-haired wife Elsieph harbour a mutual aversion; while the former seeks solace in drink, the latter concentrates on extremely casual sex. Candida and Nigretta are the direct results of this—her illegitimate, twins from a liaison with an Indian potentate, two ravishingly attractive virgins who are in the process of coming to terms with their sexuality in diametrically opposed ways. These half-caste beauties represent the elemental forces at work in the community, and the contrasting attitudes to desire and physicality that the novel repeatedly engages with.

The plot concerns an eventful Saturday which, true to comic

tradition, culminates in a riotous dance. Most of the cast are extravagant characters: the fearfully virginal Alec, bookish Turnbull the schoolmaster, even an evanescent "it-th-year medion" by the name of Gavin Ewart; the narrative spins off into virtuosic passages investigating their pieties, which in the case of several of them are truly nightmarish. Macandrew's own vision is grim: fallen into unbelief, he sees the world as a horror pattern of putrefaction and decay, a "peopled earth" which teems with filthy life, a place full of squelches, reeks and grunts. He can only survive by embracing this revulsion, a *malaise* caused by the gnawing worm of the tit; drunk in a gutter with Ewart, sprawling in his own urine, Macandrew chooses an appropriate time in which to explain his philosophy: "Take comfort then, young man, from your discomfort. Nourish the viper fanging your bosom. There's much virtue in the worm."

The motifs through which this *Weltschmerz* is presented are familiar enough if one thinks of, say, Swift or Beckett, but J. P. McDonagh prefers a luxuriant, sometimes picaresque style, the main features of

which are a magnificent vocabulary and a dense, often parodic, network of allusions. The result is best described as an off-beat black comedy in which a number of good set-pieces are interspersed with more serious rehearsal of philosophical paradoxes, and the novel is at its best when located firmly in farcical action rather than in debate; for example where a drunken group tussles and plays tricks over a publican's coffin, a scene in which dialogue and "business" are properly in proportion.

There is considerable wit in *The Chammying Worm*, and the most successful parts are perhaps also the most peculiarly Scottish: dour silence between people, the agitations of guilt and lust against a background of repressive religion, and the special importance conferred on drink. As well as being very funny in places, this is an intelligent novel, full of verbal gusto; the narrative momentum threatens to slow to a standstill only about three-quarters of the way through, dogged by the garrulous philosophical discourse.

SAC paperback scheme

James Campbell

On August 26 the TLS reported on the Scottish Arts Council's scheme to sponsor the publication of a uniform paperback series which would reprint significant works of Scottish literature. A number of applications from publishers were received, but at its last meeting the SAC's Literature Committee accepted the recommendation of the investigating sub-committee that "no further steps should be taken at present to further the establishment of the series".

Perhaps predictably, the news started some acrimonious fighting in Edinburgh, conducted, as these matters usually are, in the pages of the *Scotsman*. The most hopeful applicant, Paul Harris, rejected this Council of being "patronising" and "literary Director" of the Council, announced that "the applications were of a disappointing number and quality". Looking beyond the interests of

publishers and the SAC's need to defend itself, there are two real losers in the abandonment of this scheme: readers of Scottish books, and the literature itself. As a rule, and possibly for unavoidable reasons, Scottish literature does not get a terribly good deal at the hands of English publishers. But the small local houses in Scotland, despite their expertise, lack the resources necessary to establish strong Scottish backlists. And since the paperback-to-paperback route runs through England, new writing is likely to disappear after its first, brief run in the bookshops.

It was one of this unhappy state of affairs that the SAC's reprint scheme emerged. Now that it is to be shelved, readers who might have been introduced to, say, Edward, George, Alexander, Trochil, James Allan Ford and many others will be disappointed. According to Walter Cairns, the SAC is not burying the thing out of sight. We'll keep it constantly under review. It is to be hoped that they keep their

Brahms Four fugue

T. J. Binyon

Len Deighton

Berlin Game
304pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.
0 09 154190 5

After a long involvement in history and fiction dressed up as history Len Deighton has now returned to the subject — intelligence agencies — and the style — first-person narration — of his early novels, from *The Incessant* (1962) to *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Spy* (1976). But his hero-narrator, described once as "an upstart from Burnley, a supercilious, anti-public school technician", and resolutely anonymous — except in the films, where he took the name Harry Palmer and was played with an exact fitness by Michael Caine — has mellowed over the years. He now calls himself Bernard Samson (the surname is a distressingly obvious key to the plot), has married the beautiful and rich Fiona Kimber-Hutchinson, whose money he refuses to touch, and has two small children, a nanny and a Portuguese housekeeper.

The long lay-off has had its effects. The language creaks over the first few pages, and it takes Deighton some time to get away from the bland, featureless, international thriller style of his last book, *XPD*, and back to the quirky originality of the first novels. Accuracy of detail has suffered too: most noticeably when some of the top brass in British Intelligence, finishing off a large Sunday lunch in the country with a game of billiards, are discovered to be solemnly anointing the ends of their cues with resin, rather than chalk. The picture is so hilarious as to make us wonder, when we find that Dicky Cruyer, Samson's superior, cherishes an antique silver cow-creamer,

whether this couldn't previously have belonged to Sir Watkyn Bassett and been the centre of an intrigue involving Bertie Wooster, Jeeves, Roderick Spode and Gussie Fink-Au-Flower. However, by the time Samson flies into Berlin to find out why British spies, the East German who has been sending back economic intelligence to the London, wants to quit, Deighton is back to the old mid-season form. Berlin, as before, brings out the best in him.

In a sense, *Berlin Game* is Deighton's *Thicker, Thinner, Soldier*, Spy, being concerned, like that novel, with the winking out of a traitor to the upper echelons of British Intelligence. Although the manner is almost as elliptical as Carré's, the matter is much less richly textured — which is perhaps no bad thing. Once over the initial lump, the narrative runs downhill at the way, gathering momentum and suspense as it goes: the last 100 episodes, set on the other side of the Berlin Wall, are as good as better than anything Deighton has done before.

Yet, in the end, the book is something of a disappointment. Earlier Deighton had shown his hero's superior and colleagues, though hard and efficient in their work, to be warm without exception men obsessed with social status or official position: the power struggle within the organisation often appears almost as important as the conflict without. Now this has been taken to the extreme. Sober, *arriviste*, and the desire for power within the system are the only forces which motivate the characters. Semson and the traitor alone are allowed to have integrity, ideals and a sense of duty. And the effect, sadly, is to make some parts of *Berlin Game* read like a parody of the earlier Deighton.

The People's lament

Monty Haltrecht

Emanuel Litvinoff

Falls the Shadow
250pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 2310 7

A shot rings out, a body crumples. Well, it can't crumple; because it's behind a wire screen; but no matter. Emanuel Litvinoff is signalling with his very first page that his book is a thriller. And some trashy writing tends to confirm it — deliberately trashy, you might think, sounding a sub-Chandler note to make the point.

The murder takes place on a Tel Aviv street; the victim is a Jewish businessman, a survivor of Dachau. The plot thickens as we learn that the

assassin is not PLO, but a fellow survivor, who insists on concealing his motive until he is put to trial. One soon, though, there comes a sense of artistic confusion. A shady dealer in diamonds, used by the policeman as an informer, is run over, and there seems to be a connection with a stock-vamp-figure who may or may not be dealing in drugs. But this gets fairly perfunctory treatment, and is not closely connected with the main narrative. Another kind of book is discernible, as the policeman is drawn further and further into the assassin's meditation camp, and the horror hocus, not an element of the thriller, but the book itself. The last changes. Now there is often a patently eloquent, anguished rhetoric.

It's possible that Litvinoff had hoped to use the thriller form to persuade the reader to accept something more serious. If so, that something has not been achieved. The book is too much of a book-off-course — but passionately, and to its advantage. The policeman's researches take him to London and Berlin, and the real feeling for the work, shows a real feeling for the crumbling corners of old cities and their seamy denizens. A defence and justification of Israel is certainly part of it. But beyond this, and the heart of the book, is the policeman's "quest" for a sense of the recent experience of Jewish suffering, and the eloquence of the writing proclaims it the subject of his own.

Rebutting criticism from outside a Jew can mean the less turn and return to himself. "A vast explosion of pain," writes Litvinoff of the Holocaust, "for Jews I created a simulation of a humane history: a nation that took pride in being the People of the Book, prouder of its Jewishness than of its Jewishness." And "Israel proved more precious to the Jewish people than the Jewish people." Such phrases are so self-evident and so involuntary, they seem to be the diamond dealer's place in the book is finally established. The book is involved, unwittingly, in the same smuggling of Jews across Palestine, the safety of Palestine, is a significant as saving a country, a heroic, still-hopeful, post-war Jewish ideal, of a piece with Litvinoff's other books.

Alan Bleakley

Biography and Memoirs

Nicholas Mosley. *Rules of the Game*. Sir Oswald and Lady Cynthia Mosley. *Written For Children: An Outline of English-language Children's Literature* was first published in 1965 and has been revised twice, in 1974 and 1983. The original idea of "a brief and readable account of prose fiction for children" was divided into sections "Before 1840", "1840 — 1915" and "Since 1915". The final section has now been twice expanded to include American books, picture books, poetry and recently published books and is therefore slightly more detailed than the earlier parts and is particularly strong on the new generation of writers of the early 1960s — Mayne, Pearce, Garfield, Aiken and Dickinson. This new edition has two chapters covering what has happened since 1973. Inevitably the book deals in received opinion; it relies heavily on a technique of thumbnail criticism (referred to in the TLS review of December 9, 1983 as "practised condensation") but plots are recounted rather too lengthily. Although the author does not give the impression of treading too carefully in assessing the work of his contemporaries — some of his judgments are asstringent — the fact that he himself writes books for children often results in the slightly hermetic feel of a text aimed at the converted and a certain coyness ("If it bangs, rattles and squeaks, smells and pops up or has holes in it, we can sell it", a bookseller told me ruefully). *Written For Children*, however, is useful more for its coverage than its analysis. It provides a crisp summary of the history of children's literature and a valuable reference work for the modern period. It is illustrated throughout.

L.D.

A Susan Sontag Reader. 466pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 00 5434 0. □ Elizabeth Hardwick writes in her brief, perceptive Introduction to this selection from Susan Sontag's prose (which includes essays, stories and excerpts from the novels as well as the text of the 1975 *Saturday Review* interview): Sontag is "a particular vision, the defining glance of cultural history in and everything itself, unique... and yet reflecting a disjunctive modern consciousness that is historical". Later, longer pieces are juxtaposed with early essays (from the collection *Against Interpretation*, reviewed in the TLS of March 15, 1967) and it becomes clear that a desire to provoke has been replaced by calmer, though still unpredictable, explorations of the nature of genius. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s Sontag directs our attention to the significance of the complicated thought and temperaments of Simone de Beauvoir, to the "difficult" works of Artur Schnitzler, to the "poetry of transgression" in a film such as *Planung*, to the aesthetics of high-camp, she is now more likely to suggest that we pay affectionate homage to Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes and Elias Canetti; through her own reflective admiration we are brought closer to an understanding and appreciation of their ideas.

H.P.

RICHARD USORKIN. *Cinland Heroes*. 186pp. Hutchinson. £3.95. 0 09 152821 6. □ *Cinland Heroes* was first published by Constable in 1953 (reviewed in the TLS of September 22, 1953) and a second edition was published in 1975 by Bantam and Judd. (reviewed in the TLS of March 14 that year). This marvel of trivia, yet delightful, scholarship, was launched by Richard Usorkin on his career as the urbane, exegest of popular fiction. (Interestingly, a remark in the 1953 hardback introduction, relegating Wodehouse to the second rank of his affections is omitted in this third edition.) Dorinda Yates, Sapper and John Buchan were the authors who made bearable young Usorkin's adolescent illnesses and common room frustrations, whirling him and countless others into a wonderland — of high adventure, wondrously babbled and vile plots to overturn the fabric of society — such as the shortest short: his entry of success and old shavers does not appeal to the

U.S.

JOHN RUWE TOWNSEND. *Written For Children*. 385pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 021920 X. □ John Ruwe Townsend's *Written For Children: An Outline of English-language Children's Literature* was first published in 1965 and has been revised twice, in 1974 and 1983. The original idea of "a brief and readable account of prose fiction for children" was divided into sections "Before 1840", "1840 — 1915" and "Since 1915". The final section has now been twice expanded to include American books, picture books, poetry and recently published books and is therefore slightly more detailed than the earlier parts and is particularly strong on the new generation of writers of the early 1960s — Mayne, Pearce, Garfield, Aiken and Dickinson. This new edition has two chapters covering what has happened since 1973. Inevitably the book deals in received opinion; it relies heavily on a technique of thumbnail criticism (referred to in the TLS review of December 9, 1983 as "practised condensation") but plots are recounted rather too lengthily. Although the author does not give the impression of treading too carefully in assessing the work of his contemporaries — some of his judgments are asstringent — the fact that he himself writes books for children often results in the slightly hermetic feel of a text aimed at the converted and a certain coyness ("If it bangs, rattles and squeaks, smells and pops up or has holes in it, we can sell it", a bookseller told me ruefully). *Written For Children*, however, is useful more for its coverage than its analysis. It provides a crisp summary of the history of children's literature and a valuable reference work for the modern period. It is illustrated throughout.

C.V. WOODWARD. *The King's Peace*. 1637. 510pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 006990 9. □ First published by Collins in 1955 and reviewed in the TLS of January 7, 1955.

The King's War 1641-1647. 703pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 006991 7. □ First published by Collins in 1958 and reviewed in the TLS of November 28, 1958.

The Trial of Charles I. 253pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 006992 5. □ First published by Collins in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of September 3, 1964.

RICHARD USORKIN. *Cinland Heroes*. 186pp. Hutchinson. £3.95. 0 09 152821 6. □ *Cinland Heroes* was first published by Constable in 1953 (reviewed in the TLS of September 22, 1953) and a second edition was published in 1975 by Bantam and Judd. (reviewed in the TLS of March 14 that year). This marvel of trivia, yet delightful, scholarship, was launched by Richard Usorkin on his career as the urbane, exegest of popular fiction. (Interestingly, a remark in the 1953 hardback introduction, relegating Wodehouse to the second rank of his affections is omitted in this third edition.) Dorinda Yates, Sapper and John Buchan were the authors who made bearable young Usorkin's adolescent illnesses and common room frustrations, whirling him and countless others into a wonderland — of high adventure, wondrously babbled and vile plots to overturn the fabric of society — such as the shortest short: his entry of success and old shavers does not appeal to the

quintessential Balliol man disguised in a judicament, is mildly denigrated, a judgement rendered more remarkable following the recent biography of Aubrey Herbert. But there is far more fun to be had from the absurdities of Yates's language and plots, far more merit to be derived from Sapper's treatment of Jim Meitland's square jaw, Hugh Drummond's huge frame and the appalling villainy of Carl Petersen. The amused tolerance of his subjects' anti-semitism in the 1953 version has been toughened up and the unappetizing aspect of Yates's character made plainer. This affectionate, ironic study of a dead and gone genre is immensely charming; an indispensable guide to the books themselves.

D.J.

GORE VIOAL. *Pink Triangle and Yellow Star* and other essays 1976-1982. 350pp. Granada. £1.95. 0 586 05683 1. □ First published in Britain by Heinemann in 1982 and reviewed in the TLS of August 27 that year by Julian Symons.

History

ALAN FORREST. *The French Revolution and the Poor*. 198pp. Blackwell. £4.95. 0 631 13304 6. □ First published in 1981. Reviewed in the TLS of October 16, 1981 by George Rudd who wrote: "Dr Forrest insists that the poor in the context of eighteenth-century and Revolutionary France should not be seen as a single social group but as the total of all those, whether workers, peasants or small employers, for whom economic misfortune or governmental policy made survival impossible without some form of public assistance."

S.C. HUMPHREYS. *Anthropology and the Greeks*. 357pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £5.95. 0 7102 0016 1. □ First published in 1978 and reviewed in the TLS of October 27 that year by G.E.R. Lloyd.

JOHN R. STILLOH. *Common Landscape of America 1580-1845*. 429pp. Yale University Press. £11.50. 0 300 03046 0. □ First published in 1982 and reviewed in the TLS of October 8 that year. The reviewer, Carl Bridenbaugh, wrote that it is "a strikingly original book, unusually ambitious in its scope; in it John R. Stillog, assistant professor of landscape architecture at Harvard University, has undertaken to show how, over 265 years, Spanish and English pioneers went about altering the appearance of the vast natural environment. As the title implies, the emphasis is upon common design—the transmission out of medieval Europe of ideas concerning the use of space to North America where the untutored colonists duplicated what they remembered of their fatherlands."

C.V. WOODWARD. *The King's Peace*. 1637. 510pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 006990 9. □ First published by Collins in 1955 and reviewed in the TLS of January 7, 1955.

The King's War 1641-1647. 703pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 006991 7. □ First published by Collins in 1958 and reviewed in the TLS of November 28, 1958.

The Trial of Charles I. 253pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 006992 5. □ First published by Collins in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of September 3, 1964.

Reference

ROSE SCARON. *A Dictionary of Political Thought*. 499pp. Pan. £3.95. 0 330 28099 6. □ First published in 1982 by Macmillan and reviewed in the TLS of March 11, 1983 by Jeremy Waldron.

Religion

RUDOLF BULTMANN. *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*. 557pp. Thomas and Hudson. £4.50. 0 500 27277 2. □ Rudolf Bultmann's *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, first published in German in 1949, and in English in 1956, (it was reviewed in the TLS of September 21, 1956) now makes a welcome reappearance as a paperback, (the excellent translation is Reginald Fuller's). Bultmann never claimed that his book was a piece of original research — but it was — rather, an "interpretation". Although the author was careful not to claim too much for his work he believed that "by bringing the past to life again he [the historian] should drive home the fact that here the religious faith is your business." He was an early Christian in the light of the Old Testament, heritage, Judaism, the Greek heritage and, in clear and lively

Rose among rosemary bushes, for example. The dozen of Roses, G. S. Thomas, has added a preface, glossary, and fourteen of his own colour photographs to the 1903 edition's plentiful monochrome plates.

A.P.

NORMAN DOUGLAS. *Old Calabria*. 352pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0113 9. □ First published in 1915 by Mirlin Secker and reviewed in the TLS of March 18, 1915. The reviewer wrote: "It is a work of erudition and charm. Its author upsets as it were the paradox of a poet-proseman. For never was there a more natural mingling of the elements of learning and romance. Mr Douglas knows Calabria as very few Englishmen have known it: fever-stricken treet. He shows it in a wonderful series of pen-portraits, the acquirement of laborious days and disturbed nights. His treatment of landscape and personalities has a thumb-nail quality balanced and harmonized by the humanitarian equanimity of his mind."

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G.S.

MELVIN RICHTER. *The Politics of Conscience*. T. H. Green and His Age. 415pp. University Press of America. £12.75. 0 8196 2655 3. □ Professional philosophers generally regard T. H. Green as a dilettante, and the refutation of his arguments (the edifying conclusions of which are repugnant to them) as the work of a moment. In *The Politics of Conscience* (first published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of October 15, that year), Professor Richter explores the entirety of Green's thought with more sympathy and reverence than this, and shows how influential he and his thought were in moulding the minds of British men who were to go on, in accordance with his precepts, to govern India in an enlightened manner, to build sewers, to establish settlements in the East End, and to direct the Temperance Movement (the last a cause particularly dear to Green's heart, since his brother died of alcoholism). All this is to the good, and of vital interest to the social historian; it is a pity, though, that Richter assumes from the outset that Green was an unscrupulous or incompetent philosopher, and that he was forced to cobble together a system in order to supply a firmer basis for Christian morality than Christianity itself. Let us suppose that Moore succeeded in refuting idealism; he then got still room for a Realism which takes account of Green's critique of the atomic individualism of Hume and Mill?

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Philosophy

JOHN DONNE. *Suicide*. Transcribed and edited by William A. Clebsch. 114pp. Scholars Press. \$8.95. 0 89130 624 2. □ *Suicide* is a not always very happily modernized version of Donne's *Bianthanos: A Declaration of the Paradox or Thesis that Self-homicide is not a Naturally a Sin that it May Never Be Otherwise*; in which the nature and extent of all the laws which seem to be violated by this act are diligently surveyed ("bianthanos" means, roughly, "violent death" — the word suicide was still about fifty years in the future of the language). Describing a near-suicide in his opening paragraph, Donne confesses to a special interest: "I often have such an inclination." He argues most cogently and with a great wealth of example that the Bible, the church fathers, and even the modern commentators are at best ambivalent on the question of whether suicide is necessarily a sin. Publishing the work in 1647 (according to this edition — two more are to appear soon), and remarking that the manuscript had by his father been forbidden both the press and the fire, Donne's son explained how he had at length opted for the former as the only way to save it from the latter.

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